



NEW BOSSES ARE NEEDED AT HALL

Report by Jamie Brassington

COUNCIL bosses are looking for community groups to take over Halesowen's Cornbow Hall as part of cost-cutting plans totalling nearly £100,000.

Dudley Council says the move will save tax-payer's £96,000 a year and breathe new life into the Hagley Street venue.

The business plan is based on an a similar venture at Brierley Hill Civic Hall, which has seen the landmark building revitalised after a community group took over its day-to-day running. That venue now attracts big names from the comedy world.

But council bosses are warning applicants must show a strong business plan to ensure the site remains secured for future generations.

Councillor Ian Kettle, cabinet member for planning and economic development, said: "We have some fantastic community groups using the Cornbow Hall now for popular events and it is only right we look to build on that."

Fresh

"A community group running the venue could give this venue fresh impetus to bring in new acts which will in turn help bring even more people to the town."

"We have already proven this approach can be very successful with Brierley Hill Civic Hall going from strength to strength. But it is important we find the right group who share our vision for keeping this in community use and create a vibrant, inclusive community asset."

The chosen group would organise shows and other events at the venue while the council keeps ownership of the building.

The move has been welcomed by Halesowen South's Councillor David Vickers, who said: "The takeover of Brierley Hill Civic Hall was a success, they have done a marvellous job there."

"Providing we can get the same people using Cornbow Hall as we have now and more, it can only be a good move for the venue."

Groups have until December 15 to register an interest. For more information, visit www.dudley.gov.uk

TV'S STEVI HELPS LIGHT UP TOWN FOR CHRISTMAS



Celebrity Big Brother star Stevi Ritchie was a special guest when the Halesowen Christmas lights were switched on by David Watson

CHRISTMAS officially arrived in Halesowen after the town's lights were switched on.

Hundreds of people flocked to Somers Square to see the festive decorations sparked into life.

X Factor and Celebrity Big Brother star

Stevi Ritchie was the headline act, while Romsley army veteran David Watson, who won gold at the Invictus Games, was chosen to switch on the lights.

The show was hosted by Black Country Radio, during the event on Saturday, when

the crowds were entertained by fire-breathing circus acts.

Halesowen and Rowley Regis MP James Morris and deputy mayor of Dudley Alan Taylor, a Halesowen councillor, were also among those to attend.

FOOTBALL

Pardew in frame for Baggies role

WEST Brom are eyeing up Alan Pardew as a possible replacement for sacked head coach Tony Pulis.

The 56-year-old is expected to be interviewed this week by chairman John Williams after emerging as one of the few available contenders following the departure of Pulis on Monday.

Pardew is also well known to Albion's technical director Nick Hammond, who worked with him at Reading.

● Wales – page 40

EDUCATION

College keeps up the 'Good' work

HALESOWEN College has maintained its 'Good' rating by Ofsted following the latest inspection by education watchdog Ofsted.

Inspectors rated Halesowen College good across the board. Principal David Williams said: "We are really pleased to have kept our Good rating which shows the success of our students and the hard work of our staff."

FUNDRAISING

Youngster raises cash for wheelchair

A HALESOWEN schoolgirl has raised hundreds of pounds towards a new wheelchair for a hospital after she was hit by a car.

Tegan, Webb, who attends Huntingtree Primary, was hit by the car in The Wickets, in Brierley Hill, on May 30 and required surgery for a broken leg at hospital. She is wheelchair-bound and missed out on her school's charity fundraising initiative to buy 50 new chairs for Russells Hall.

But she did not let her injuries stop her, and has since raised £800 to buy a new one through her own fundraising initiative.

INSIDE

WHOLE LOTTA LOVE FOR ROB



PAGE 12

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2 **CONTENTS**

PETER RHODES	6
LETTERS	7
FEED A FAMILY	19
THE TICKET	23
BRAIN GYM	29
PROPERTY	32
MOTORING	37-38
SPORT	39-40
CONTACT US	

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'White Widow's' son believed to be alive



Terrorist Junaid Hussain

THE radicalised son of a British terrorist recruiter is believed to be alive despite reports he was killed in a drone strike.

Sally Jones, who was dubbed the 'White Widow' and married to Birmingham terrorist Junaid Hussain, died following a US airstrike in June.

She travelled to Syria to join ISIS with son Joe 'Jojo' Dixon in 2013 but died when the American forces targeted the convoy she was travelling with.

Reports at the time suggested 12-year-old Jojo was also killed in the

attack. But Syrian sources now believe the boy is still alive and has been training as an ISIS fighter.

It has been claimed that at the time of the drone strike the youngster was actually 35 miles away in village near Syria's border with Iraq.

Jones left her home in Britain to marry Kings Heath terrorist hacker Hussain but Jojo was taken from her to train as a fighter alongside other children when her husband was killed two years ago.

Terrorists decided Jojo was old

enough to fight for ISIS when he reached his 12th birthday last December, The Telegraph reported.

He took part in several months of training as part of the 'cubs of the caliphate' camp with his last known photo snapped during training in Raqqa. A nine-minute ISIS video released last year appeared to show Jojo, who was renamed Hamza Hussain aged nine, killing a prisoner.

It was believed Jones trained European female recruits in weapons and tactics.

Man fell to his death through rotten stairs

A PENSIONER died after falling through a rotten staircase at his Black Country home and suffocating when landing face down, an inquest heard.

Police officers discovered 67-year-old Mervyn Parkes' body in his Cradley home after his cousin reported him missing.

They entered the property on Hillcrest Avenue on October 31 where he was found face down, Black Country Coroner's Court was told.

Assistant coroner Laura Nash said his cause of death was down to 'positional and traumatic asphyxia', while hypothermia was also a contributing factor.

His cousin, who was his only close living relative, called police after she had not heard from him in a while.

Mr Parkes, born in Stourbridge, lived on his own and was retired.

Police found he had fallen through a rotten staircase and believed his body had been there for some time, said Ms Nash.

Ladders

She commented how officers had described his house as being in an unkempt condition.

Mr Parkes had been using a set of step ladders as a result of the rotten staircase, the inquest heard.

Ms Nash said: "On the balance of probability I put his cause of death as accidental. His cause of death is down to positional and traumatic asphyxia and hypothermia."

"Police attended his address after his cousin raised concern that she had not heard from him for a while.

"Police could see on arrival circumstances that he had fallen through a rotten staircase.

His landing position meant he suffocated and could not breathe.

Hypothermia, a medical emergency when the body loses heat quicker than it can create it, also contributed to his death, the court was told.

Doreen returns to meet market pals



Doreen signs copies of her DVD at Brierly Hill market with butcher Bruce Hodgkiss from Halesowen

SHE is known as 'a Lazy Cow' but kind-hearted Doreen Tipton was keen to bring love and laughter to traders and shoppers at Brierly Hill Market.

Doreen, who started out life as an internet video star thought up by Quarry Bank writer and filmmaker David Tristram, visited the market on High Street as part of her 'grand tour' of the area as she shot scenes for Doreen's Black Country DVD earlier in the year.

On her return last Thursday,

she spent hours greeting stallholders and shoppers. Caretaker Frank Chamberlain said: "It went really well and we had quite a crowd. "She sold lots of books, DVD's and calendars.

"She was really lovely and a lot of the people who came down were there to support her and have banter and laughter.

"There were several people on the DVD from the market too."

He continued: "It's great that things like this bring the High Street

and market back into the spotlight. "Doreen is a real friend of the High Street and market and she does whatever she can to help us out."

Doreen - Walsall actress Gill Jordan - is touring new show Doreen: Rise of the Yam-Yam before she takes up residence at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre for panto Jack and the Beanstalk.

She won the best newcomer panto award for her role as The Lazy Empress in Aladdin, the Grand's previous panto.

Cannabis is found during crackdown on illicit cigs

A CANNABIS farm was discovered in Dudley during a crackdown on the sale of illegal tobacco.

A haul of more than 50,000 illegal or counterfeit cigarettes, as well as the surprise find of around 1,000 cannabis plants, were seized during raids by Dudley Council's trading standards team and West Midlands Police using trained tobacco detection dogs.

In the joint operation, the raids were carried out at properties in Dudley, Brierley Hill and Halesowen, along with a routine inspection in Stourbridge. At three properties they discovered tobacco, while at the Dudley premises three floors of cannabis plants were found.

Councillor Peter Miller, cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said: "Through joint operations with partners and our own investigations we are working hard to stop the sale of illegal cigarettes. While our day of action was targeted at finding illegal tobacco, at one of the properties a large number of cannabis plants were found, which the police are investigating.

"Selling illegal tobacco is a crime and offenders need to know that they will face consequences. Illegal tobacco is sold at low prices and without necessary health warnings which makes it easier for young smokers to get hooked."

Last chance to join Santa Dash

THERE'S still time to sign up for the Sandwell Santa Dash at Sandwell Valley Country Park.

About 500 people are expected to take part in a Santa costume in the third Sandwell Santa Dash on December 2 with the deadline for registration being tomorrow (Friday).

The event is being organised by Mytime Active in partnership with Sandwell Leisure Trust, Sandwell Council and Sandwell Valley Country Park.

"It's not a race, but a fun run, jog or walk around the course, allowing people to be part of a fantastic Christmas experience as one of hundreds of Santas taking part," said deputy council leader Councillor Syeda Khatun.

See www.mytimeactive.co.uk/sandwell-santa-dash for more details.

Family sought by coroner's officer

THE Black County Coroner's Officer is hoping to get in touch with relatives of Anthony Ryan, aged 60, who was found dead in his home in Tansey Green Road, Brierley Hill, earlier this month.

Call 0121 569 6990.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Festive sparkle for area of town

TWENTY-FIVE lampposts in Halesowen will have an extra sparkle when Christmas lights are switched on in an area of the town, thanks to sponsorship from residents and local businesses.

The Shell Corner lights in Halesowen will be turned on this Saturday at 4pm.

The celebrations will begin at Long Lane Library from 3.15pm.

Hot drinks will be served and a choir will also be performing as part of the event.

Almost half of the lampposts, which feature LED lights, have been sponsored by residents and businesses.

Pushchair was struck by lorry

A TODDLER was fortunate to escape with just a bump to her head after her pushchair was struck by a lorry in Dudley on Monday afternoon.

The accident happened on the A461 Duncan Edwards Way in Dudley.

An ambulance spokeswoman said: "When call assessors in our control room received 999 calls reporting a collision between a lorry and a pushchair, they feared the worst. Whilst ambulance staff found no other apparent injuries, they took the decision to convey the girl to Birmingham Children's Hospital with her mum."

Careers fair will be hosted by MP

AN MP has organised a careers fair in Stourbridge. Margot James will host the event at the Glasshouse College on Thursday, November 30.

It is part of the Stourbridge MP's Raising Aspirations programme.

The event will take place from 4.30pm to 6pm. Businesses confirmed to attend include Barclays, Jaguar Land Rover, Virgin Media, Dudley NHS Group, Dudley Council and West Midlands Ambulance Service.

To attend email margot.james.mp@parliament.uk or call (01384) 370574.

Time limit for online park consultations

TIME is running out for borough residents who use Stevens Park. Quarry Bank, who want to take part in consultation about the future of the park.

Following first phase agreement by the heritage lottery fund, Dudley Council is now looking at moving the project onto the next phase.

The online questionnaire can be found at www.dudley.gov.uk and should be completed by no later than Thursday, November 30.

Footballing fraudster has been shown the red card

THE final whistle has been blown on a footballing fraudster who netted more than £14,000 in disability benefits despite banging in goals on a Sunday morning.

Gary 'Gaz' Wilson was told he had avoided jail 'by the narrowest of margins' when he was before the court for sentencing.

He racked up cash in Disability Living Allowance and Employment Support Allowance while at the same time, during November 2012 and May last year, the 30-year-old 'prolific' striker from Bilston was turning out for Sunday league teams.

But the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) cried foul after filming him playing.

Father-of-four Wilson, who once had a pro contract at Newcastle United, admitted two counts of benefit fraud as he had failed to inform the DWP his condition had improved.

His claims were not deemed false in the beginning and Walsall Magistrates Court heard he still suffered from back and hip problems.

Magistrates handed him an 18-week prison sentence suspended for two years.

Wilson, of St Chads Road, was also ordered to pay £135 costs and adhere to a three-month curfew.

He has so far paid back around £4,700 of the £14,568.63 that he was not entitled to.

Boy hit by 4x4 outside school not badly hurt

A BOY escaped without a major injury after a collision with a 4x4 vehicle in Birmingham.

The incident happened outside Harborne Hill School, Harborne Road, Edgbaston shortly before 4pm last Thursday.

An ambulance, a paramedic officer and the Midlands Air Ambulance from Cosford with a trauma doctor on board were sent to the scene.

A West Midlands Ambulance Service spokeswoman said: "When crews arrived they found a boy, believed to be 12-years-old, who was on the floor after a collision with a 4x4."

"The boy was said to have initially been knocked unconscious however he was thankfully awake when ambulance staff arrived. Crews carried out an initial assessment and found the boy had suffered an isolated head injury."

"The boy was given pain relief and was fully immobilised before being taken to Birmingham Children's Hospital for assessment and further treatment."

Don't tell police, victims allegedly told

CHILDREN allegedly sexually abused by Jehovah's Witnesses were told by the organisation not to report it, it has been claimed.

Victims from across the UK have claimed they were routinely abused and that the religion's own rules protected perpetrators.

One child abuse lawyer believes there could be thousands of victims across the country who have not come forward. The organisation says it did not shield abusers and any suggestion of a cover-up was absolutely false.

Alleged victims - men and women - from Bir-

mingham, Worcestershire, Cheltenham, Leicester and Glasgow have spoken out with one waiving her right to anonymity.

Louise Palmer, who now lives in Evesham but was formerly of Halesowen, was born into the organisation along with her brother Richard Davenport, who started assaulting her when she was four. He is serving a 10-year prison sentence for the abuse. The 41-year-old claimed she was told not to go to police.

"I asked [the organisation], 'what should I do? Do you report it to the police, [or] do I report it to the police?'"

"And their words were that they strongly advised me not to go to the police because it would bring reproach on Jehovah."

Jehovah's Witnesses are members of a movement best known for their door-to-door evangelistic work.

In a statement the organisation said any suggestion that Jehovah's Witnesses covered up child abuse was absolutely false. It said victims and their parents had the absolute right to report the matter. It described child abuse as a heinous crime and sin.

The allegations by Ms Palmer follow an investigation by the BBC.

Metro boost is a 'game changer' for borough

A £250 million boost for local transport, extending the Midland Metro route to Dudley and Merry Hill, has been hailed as a 'game changer' by the borough's council leader.

It followed the Prime Minister's announcement of plans for better transport links across the West Midlands in a bid to create thousands of jobs.

Dudley Council leader Councillor Patrick Harley hailed the decision as 'a real game changer' for the borough, saying it would create thousands of jobs.

On a visit to Birmingham on Monday Theresa May said she hoped to see further falls in unemployment across the region as a result of the scheme. The regional rate is still among the highest in the UK at 5.5 per cent.

Mrs May said she was 'optimistic' that the region would be handed more powers under a second devolution deal.

The PM visited the EEF Technology Hub to meet apprentices with Chancellor Philip Hammond, Business Secretary Greg Clark and West Midlands Mayor Andy Street.

Mr Street said via Twitter: "The extension of the Midland Metro from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill has been a long time coming. This announcement means Dudley and Brierley Hill will be connected to the rail network for the first time since the 1960s."

Dudley Council chief executive Sarah Norman took to social media to say: "This will be a massive boost to Dudley town and Brierley Hill with the Dudley section open in 2022, Brierley Hill in 2023. It will unlock over 30,000 new homes and 865,900sqm of commercial floorspace, accommodating nearly 35,000 jobs."

The £250m transport boost is seen as the first move in a second devolution deal for the region, which the West Midlands Combined Authority has been pushing for.

Mrs May said: "We are already seeing, in the combined authority, in the Mayor, the difference that having that devolution can bring."



Artists Cliff Collins and Colin Burchill have decorated the memorial shell

Memorial shell goes on show

IT was designed to cause maximum damage during warfare but this artillery shell will now serve as a memorial to those who died on the battlefield.

The item has been decorated by art lecturers at Halesowen College and will take its place in an area of Halesowen that was given its name by another shell almost a century ago.

A campaign has been running to return a shell to Shell Corner. A First World War shell stood in the area between 1924 and 1937 until it mysteriously disappeared. A replacement has been donated by the bomb squad in Essex.

Ward councillor Stuart Henley was desperate to bring back a shell as an important feature of the area's history and the college was asked to get involved in making it a memorial. It now features poppies and a soldier looking down at the grave of a colleague. It is hoped it will be unveiled at Shell Corner next year as part of commemorations to mark 100 years since the end of the First World War.

Councillor Henley said he was overwhelmed with the efforts of college art lecturers Colin Burchill and Cliff Collins, who spent months decorating the shell, which is on display at Long Lane Library and will then be at the Fixed Wheel Brewery.

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COUNTY NEWS

£284k raised at seized car auction

TWENTY three BMWs and 17 Audis were among 180 seized vehicles which have been sold at auction by West Midlands Police.

The haul has raised £284,480 for the force and included one vehicle sold for £19,700.

Not all cars seized by the police were sold at auction, with 4,740 so far sent for crushing this year.

In total 8,091 have been seized from the roads in 2017, most for being uninsured.

Moorhouse and Delaney on bill

COMEDIANS Justin Moorhouse and Gary Delaney will be performing in the next Live at the Civic comedy night at Brierley Hill Civic Hall in the new year.

The show is on February 17 with tickets £10 if booked by the end of this month from bhilcivic.co.uk

Moorhouse has appeared on Live At The Apollo and 8 Out Of 10 Cats, is a regular panellist on Five Live's Fighting Talk and has been in Coronation Street. Gary Delaney, married to fellow comic Sarah Millican, is a Mock The Week regular. The host will be Dudley's Wayne Beese.

Rock legends Iron Maiden back in Brum

LEGENDARY rockers Iron Maiden return to Birmingham next year.

Formed in 1975, the band have released 38 albums – including live recordings, EPs and compilations.

Their 16th studio album, The Book of Souls, was released in 2015.

Iron Maiden will play Birmingham's Genting Arena on August 7. Tickets will go on sale from 9am on November 24.

Children were killed 'in most appalling manner'

By Annabal Bagdi

A REFUGEE who found sanctuary in Britain murdered his two children in 'the most appalling manner imaginable', a judge said.

Taxi driver Endris Mohammed killed eight-year-old Saros Endris and his sister Leonor, six, and attempted to murder his partner, Penil Teklehaimanot, by tampering with a gas pipe and setting fire to the family home in Hamstead, Great Barr.



Endris Mohammed – set car alight

Mohammed, 47, had denied the murders, claiming diminished responsibility allegedly caused by a depressive disorder. But, rejecting his claims that he had not meant to kill his family, Mr Justice Andrew Gilbert said: "You designed to kill all three."

Passing sentence at Birmingham Crown Court the judge added: "This country has a long proud tradition of welcoming those who flee from persecution. That secure and apparently happy life was destroyed by you. Your partner lost her family and her home at one fell swoop."

Mr Justice Andrew Gilbert sentenced Mohammed to life in prison with a minimum 33 years.

He told Mohammed: "In the early hours of October 28, 2016, you scattered petrol around the living room of the house the four of you shared, having tried to disconnect the cooker and gas hose, ready



Siblings Saros, aged eight and Leonor, aged six, who were murdered by their father

to set light to the house where your partner slept upstairs. Your idea was that when the petrol caught light, there would be a conflagration which would consume all three of them. You smothered your children with petrol soaked cloth before or after preparing the other parts of the conflagration.

"That the conflagration did not take place was because you did not understand that you had made the atmosphere too full of petrol fumes, and because the gas hose had been designed to resist being cut.

"The smoke alarm woke your partner. Fortunately, she was able to escape with the help of her neighbours. But it was too late for the children, both of whom you had smothered."

He added: "As I have said, your partner had established her life here as a refugee from persecution. That safe haven she shared with you and her children was destroyed by you in the most appalling manner imaginable, for this was a terrible criminal enterprise on your part, designed to kill all three of your family, partner and children, as they slept.

"Your children looked to you for guidance, protection and love. They trusted you implicitly and were enjoying your company even on the night of their murder. You repaid their trust in you by killing them."

Mohammed – who originally came to the UK from Ethiopia – was told: "You deliberately snuffed out their young lives," by Justice Gilbert.

Grass is cut and weeds go in council green boost

COUNCIL bosses are set to pump £500,000 into green care over the next two years, giving a boost to parks and open spaces.

Dudley Council has invested £150,000 this financial year and is proposing to spend a further £350,000 next year.

Councillor Karen Shakespeare, cabinet member for environmental services, said the move is to reverse cuts which were made under the last administration, run by Labour.

She said: "We are investing £150,000 this financial year which will allow us to reinstate grass cutting at 125 sites and focus on weed removal on our highways. We are proposing a package of measures totalling £350,000 next financial year to improve maintenance of our parks and open spaces.

Listened

"We have listened to our residents and this proposed programme will improve overall standards of green care maintenance, restoring community pride and making the borough a more attractive, appealing place to live."

In September, it was revealed that the local authority had slashed its budget on grass-cutting services by £50,000 to make savings. But this move is reversing that measure.

A Dudley Council report highlighted how, for an urban authority, the Dudley borough is 'enriched with green space'.

Around 38 square miles of green space exists in the borough. Around 30 per cent of this is made up of parks, nature reserves and open space looked after by the council's Green Care team.

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Female officer used a taxi to pursue and catch crooks

A POLICE officer Tasered a burglary suspect, while another suspect was arrested at gunpoint during an incident in Stourbridge.

The officers had been called to reports of a burglary in Park Street when the drama unfolded at 10.15pm on Saturday. West Midlands Police said an officer made her way through the front door of the property and into a corridor where she came face-to-face with a man.

Man charged on theft of poppy cash

A MAN has been charged after a charity collection box containing cash from the sale of remembrance poppies was snatched.

The collection box, which contained an undisclosed amount of cash, was stolen from a butcher's shop situated in a village in South Staffordshire.

Kevin Waldron, aged 35, of Norfolk Road, Wollaston, has been charged with stealing a poppy charity box from the shop in Wombourne on November 9.

A red Royal British Legion donations box was stolen from Bromley Butchers on Common Lane in the village.

As part of the investigation, police had released some CCTV images showing a man in the Co-op store next door to the butcher's shop just 15 minutes before the theft took place, hoping to trace him in relation to the incident.

He is believed to have pointed a gun at her. She identified herself as a police officer but the suspect held the gun at chest height. Then, as the officer backed out of the house, the suspect escaped with a number of others.

But the officer was not giving up, on hearing from passers-by that the gang had escaped in a car she commandeered a taxi to follow them.

The led to her deploying the electro-shock weapon when one of the gang failed to comply with her instructions, while more officers arrived and arrested two other suspects. An hour later, armed police arrested another suspect at gunpoint on Stourbridge High Street.

Ch Insp Jack Hadley praised the female officer and said: "The officer demonstrated outstanding courage and professionalism to single-handedly pursue these armed suspects in the correct manner. I am extremely impressed with her dogged commitment and tenacity."

A 17-year-old youth, who cannot be named, was charged with possession of a knife and cannabis and will appear at Wolverhampton Youth Court next month. Reece Lones, aged 19, of no fixed address, was charged with criminal damage to property and possession of a firearm. He was remanded to appear at Wolverhampton Crown Court on December 18.

Football day in tragic Chris's memory



Back from left, Chris's partner Sarah-Jayne Collins, stepmother Leanne Room and mother Pauline Room. Front, from left, Chris's brothers Josh Brookes, Declan Room, 11, and Craig Brookes. Inset, Chris

A COMMUNITY came together to raise money for the funeral of Oldbury bridge fall victim Chris Brookes. More than 100 people attended the event at Meadow Road Youth & Venture Site in Wren's Nest, Dudley.

Chris, aged 22, died after falling from a bridge over Wolverhampton ring road on the night of October 28. He left behind a three-year-old daughter, called Layla-Jade, and pregnant girlfriend Sarah Jayne Collins, 23, who is expecting their son Chris Junior in January.

Sarah, from Tame Road, Oldbury, said: "I think it is amazing how many people came out. It is overwhelming. I think the support has been amazing. Chris would be proud."

A football tournament, tombola and a bouncy castle for children were among the activities held during the community event last Saturday. The day was held to raise money for Chris' funeral next Wednesday.

Two games of football were held with dozens gathering a round the banks to watch. There were also stalls, bouncy castle and a burger van.

Chris' mother Pauline Room, 47, from Netherton, said: "It is overwhelming to see such support."

A fundraising was set up in the wake of his death to support his family. The target was £3,000, but it was surpassed within a week and now stands at more than £4,300. To donate, visit www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/ripchrisbrookes

Annual ball raises more than £9.5k

MORE than £9,500 has been raised for a Stourbridge Hospice at the charity's annual ball.

Hundreds of guests spent the evening at the Ramada Park Hall Hotel in Wolverhampton, celebrating their support of the hospice and helping to raise more than £9,500 for families in the Black Country and surrounding area.

Live entertainment was provided by Jamie Knight and his Manuka Trio, as well as games and interactive activities for guests throughout the evening and also an auction which contributed heavily to the total amount raised on the night.

Diane Moore, event organiser for Mary Stevens Hospice, said: "We really are privileged to have such a passionate and committed supporter base, and it was fantastic to see everyone dressed up to the nines for their hospice."

"There was a special atmosphere throughout the night, and the money raised through this event will make the most enormous difference to the families relying on our care. We'd just like to thank everyone who came and all of our corporate partners who made the evening possible with donations and sponsorship!"

The annual ball which has been sponsored by Birmingham printers Callprint for the past two years.

Festive goodies on offer at craft fair

A CHRISTMAS craft fair is being held at Bewdley Pines Golf Club on Saturday to raise money for the West Midlands Air Ambulance. It will be held from 11am to 5pm.

Stalls will include festive decorations, candles, children's clothes and customised cushions. The raffle will include prizes donated by Kidderminster Harriers FC. Admission is free.

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



Art price is manic Mundi for collector

WE'VE all been there at some time or other. You put a few quid away each month, build yourself a nice little nest egg, and then the mid-life crisis beckons.

It's just the way life goes. One minute you don't have two pennies to rub together, then suddenly you think to yourself "I've got a spare £360 million knocking about in the bank earning a paltry interest rate. I think I will spend it on a picture for the dining room instead."

Well that's what seems to have happened for one person at least. Last week, a tatty and not-particularly attractive painting that might be by Leonardo Da Vinci, fetched a staggering 450 million



Salvator Mundi, or saviour of the world

dollars at Christies in New York. That's £360 million in real money.

Now, I'm the first to admit I know nothing about fine art. When it comes to the masters, I'm a card-carrying philistine. I mean, The Mona Lisa? Yes,

it's better than I can do, but most things are. What differentiates that from, say, the work of a good art college lecturer?

Some years ago, I saw the celebrated paintings of Dudley by J W M Turner, which used to hang in the town's art gallery before it closed. I suppose I ought to say what an uplifting and enriching experience it was, but to be honest I thought they were a bit of a mess.

I certainly prefer the work of Black Country artist, and all-round nice guy, Graham Colbourne. But while Turner's works are priceless treasures, Graham donates his to local charities. Yet even among those in the know, the £360m painting has received a distinctly lukewarm reaction.

Jason Farago, of the New York Times called it "a proficient but not especially distinguished religious picture from turn-of-the-16th-century Lombardy, put through a wringer of restorations."

What does interest me, though, is that in 1958 the same picture sold for £45, or just under a grand when you allow for inflation. Back then, it was not thought to be by Da Vinci, so the inflated price is solely about who painted it, rather than any merit it might possess.

Which is just as well, because if I wanted that on my wall, I would not be crossing the Atlantic with my chequebook. I would cut the print out of the catalogue, and head down to Wilko for a frame.

Sometimes best to leave smartphone in your pocket



Adrian Edmondson – and which Shakespearean role will be next for him?



Sathnam Sanghera – success from what was once there for many working-class kids



Theresa May – where politics is involved, there's no legal lock that can't be picked

Paramedic: No need to shame notewriter

PARAMEDICS on an emergency call in Birmingham found this message on their ambulance: "You may be saving lives but don't park your van in a stupid place and block my drive." A paramedic posted the note on social media. But why? We pay paramedics to save lives, not to turn their job into photo-opportunities, nor to score points off members of the public who offend them. The paramedics could not have known the mental state of the person writing the note, nor the effects on him – or on neighbourhood relationships – of blabbing it online. It may be hard to believe in this Twitter-obsessed age but there are times when the best thing you can do with your smartphone is leave it in your pocket.

EARLY-morning mumbling. I heard a radio reporter describing an increase in the number of councils enforcing debts by the use of bayonets. Bailiffs, apparently.

IT'S excellent to see Adrian Edmondson getting rave reviews as the pompous old steward Malvolio in Twelfth Night at Stratford. I had lunch with him once in a wine bar in Wolverhampton and I can't recall an interview attracting so much interest, and obvious affection, from customers. It was inevitable that The Young Ones generation would eventually make it to the classical stage; Lenny Henry once told me his dream was to play Malvolio. And then he went off and did a memorable Othello instead. And what Shakespearean role will next beckon Mr Edmondson, still best remembered for those frenetic frying-pan fights with Rik Mayall? Bottom, perhaps?

IF Moscow really is planting fake news to bring down the West, expect it to be a well-con-

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cealed operation. You know how it is. You open one Russian troll and there's another troll inside.

THANKS for your memories of words spoken by teachers many years ago which have stuck in your memory. A reader who taught geography for 40 years describes asking one of his former pupils what, if anything, he remembered about his lessons. "I was hoping for some profound geographical memory," he says. Instead, the pupil recalled: "I spilt some ink on the classroom carpet and you called me a berk".

AND before some of you of a certain age reach for the keyboard for a good harrumph, I am ahead of you. Carpet in the classroom? Luxury.

I WROTE recently about the Co-op Bank no longer supplying addressed envelopes for customers to send their credit-card payments. A reader asks: "When did banks do anything to help their customers?" The common view of business, he says, is that their idea of "helping" customers is to make it increasingly difficult to contact them by letter or phone. If you're not on email, you're stuffed.

UNDER the headline "CoE to allow boys to wear dresses," the latest Private Eye magazine pokes fun at the Church of England which has suggested children should be able to "try out the many cloaks of identity," with little boys being allowed to wear tutus and girls to wear

tool belts if they wish. The Eye makes the point that CoE clergy are regularly seen in elaborate "non-gender" vestments. This surely rings a bell with older readers who recall a classic 1986 front cover during the furious debate on female ordination. It showed three smiling bishops in their magnificent flowing robes with the caption: "Who needs women priests when they've got us?"

I WATCHED The Boy with the Topknot (BBC2), Sathnam Sanghera's tale of growing up in Wolverhampton in a family stalked by mental illness. Later, I picked up the copy of his book he presented to me nine years ago. In the acknowledgments he noted: "I would like to thank Peter Rhodes . . . for giving me my first break in journalism." I'm proud of helping this gifted young writer to get started in his career although, to be honest, I can't recall doing much more than offering a few tips. The real leap forward in Sathnam Sanghera's life came from something once available to millions of bright working-class kids. A grammar-school education.

FASCINATING to see Theresa May "locking in" the timing of Britain leaving the EU by writing the departure date into law. I seem to recall that the timing of general elections was locked into law, setting them at five-yearly intervals, until Mrs May thought a snap election would be a good idea. When politics is involved, there ain't a legal lock that can't be picked.

HOWARDS End. That's the correct title. No apostrophe. I can't explain it either. Nor can I explain why a TV series has been made when a perfectly fine movie of Howards End already exists.

TALKING POINT



Kindness can create a lasting memory

Why do we always hear 'there's a lot of bad 'uns out there'? Yes I am sure that is the case but there are also a lot of good 'uns as well, so let's hear more about them instead.

It is a shame that sometimes it does take something bad to happen to really show the true character of people.

Often the people you think will be there by your side disappear into thin air, but maybe somebody you feel you hardly know, or don't know at all, goes above and beyond.

And with all the awful atrocities this year, somewhere, among all the tragedy and sadness, there are tales of heroism, kindness, on both a small and major scale. And sometimes it is the people you think least likely to step up – people dropping kids at school, on their way to work, popped out to get a paper, or just on a night out with mates – who step in to help. And even if, at the time, the help seemed minimal, it is how it makes the victim feel – supported, not alone.

There was an incident recently which summed up how a little thought can go such a long way. My daughter-in-law was on the motorway when the exhaust dropped off her car. With two children in the back of the car she quickly pulled onto the hard shoulder and rang for help.

The highway patrol turned up to advise and luckily she had breakdown cover.

So it was a case of waiting, probably for the best part of an hour, on the hard shoulder. As advised they got out of the car and stood outside.

It was cold, windy and wet and trying to keep two children warm and a two-year-old from straying into danger is no mean feat as the cars race by. She called us from the roadside, scared and cold.

Cars sped past but one kind man pulled over and offered her drinks and crisps for the kids and a coat to keep them warm.

It probably cost him next to nothing but the difference that made to the situation was immense. When she safely arrived at her mum's after having her car towed there, she called us to say all was fine.

And the thing she most remembered was not the fear and cold but the fact that somebody had stopped to help. A little kindness, a lasting memory. Her mum put something on Facebook, and I hope he saw it, or somebody who knows him told him, as he deserves praise for what he did. OK you might say a small gesture – crisps and drinks don't cost a lot – but for those few minutes the situation changed from despair to a warm glow at somebody's kindness. So you see, there are a lot of good people out there.

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Don't set up NHS boss as the fall guy

AFTER being on the edge of crisis during the summer, we have to hope that the National Health Service will be able to cope in the coming winter.

We have to hope that the NHS will be protected from major outbreaks of flu and the winter vomiting virus.

We have to hope that the NHS will not suffer too much from staff shortages as many foreign staff decide to

leave Britain or not apply as a result of the uncertainty about Brexit.

We have to hope that the NHS will be able to cope with the problems caused by bed blocking as a result of social care being underfunded.

Spare a thought for Simon Stevens, the NHS Chief Executive, who has been told that he is to be held personally responsible for NHS performance but who does not have any power to decide the amount of money it receives.

In June 2016 the country voted to leave the EU. Many people were motivated by the claim that we would be able to give an extra £350 million a week to the NHS.

We have to insist that the Government gives Simon Stevens and the NHS the money it deserves instead of setting him up as a fall guy,

R TABERNER
Tividale

Green belt – we need to know

COUNCILLOR Harley's comment that 'It is too early to talk about specific locations', clashes dramatically with your headline 'Six weeks to save Green Belt'.

Since UKIP decided to back the Tories on Dudley Council, Cllr Harley has become Dudley's representative on the WM Combined Authority. The decision over the green belt will be taken by the seven leaders of the seven metropolitan councils in the West Midlands. None of these were elected to take decisions on this scale. It represents a huge democratic deficit.

Paul Mountford, Dudley's chief planning officer, talks about a 'green belt review'. What will this entail? We must have some consultation on this. The people of Halesowen made their views clear the last time it was raised. Will Messrs Harley and Mountford, along with James Morris and Mayor Andy Street, be getting to public meetings in Halesowen anytime soon?

JOHN PAYNE
Halesowen

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
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Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

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Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Code of Practice: Our policy is to correct errors as soon as we can. The Chronicles adhere to the Editors' Code of Practice, which can be seen at www.ipso.co.uk. If you are unhappy with the accuracy of a story, write to The Editor, Chronicles, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

Art should be on show

READERS have no doubt seen the reports about the Brooke Robinson collection which now has no home due to the closure of Dudley Art Gallery and may wonder who he was. Brooke Robinson was a wealthy solicitor who was MP for Dudley for 20 years. On his death in 1911 he willed the sum of £30,000 for his collection of paintings, furniture and artefacts to be displayed. As this was a vast sum of money at the time, his widow and the trustees decided the money would be used to build the Brooke Robinson Memorial Hall which we now call the Town Hall, a coroners' court and also an art museum.

To do this required an act of Parliament, the Brooke Robinson Museum Charity Scheme Confirmation Act 1919. Under a deed of covenant the trustees and Dudley Council would maintain the exhibits and display them for the people of Dudley. So for all Mr Robinson gave to Dudley borough he asked only for space for his collection to be displayed, which it was before being shut away until 1981 when it was found a home in the art gallery.

RON GWILLIAMS
Brierley Hill

Museums in muddle over plans

I just wish we could be told the truth about the Brooke Robinson Collection.

All we have received so far are cryptic and contradictory news items released by the council and the Brooke Robinson Trust.

The whole basis of the argument for moving Dudley Museum was to sell off the museum building in St James's Road to generate funds after severe Government cuts. Now there seem to be plans to reopen the building in St James's Road and display the Brooke Robinson Collection.

The trust seems to be very active in re-ordering its collection (hence the recent auction). If that is the case why has the council spent £300,000 in moving the museum in the first place when it could have stayed where it was? It's a great museum but no-one goes there now because it's hidden away at Archives.

Please may we have an answer?

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Husband murdered his wife with an axe

A HUSBAND murdered his wife with an axe after convincing himself that she was having an affair.

West Midlands Police officers found Norbert Chikerema behind the wheel of his Nissan Qashqai in a Birmingham supermarket car park in the early hours of January 30 with his dead wife beside him.

Nyasha Kahari – who was known to family and friends as Gillian – had suffered catastrophic head injuries after repeated blows from an axe.

Mother-of-four Mrs Kahari, aged 35, had left the family home in Overdale Road, Quinton, with her husband the previous evening. It was thought they were heading out on home visits as part of their care in the community business. However, detectives suspected 42-year-old Chikerema had already planned to kill her that night.

Blood-stained

A blood-stained axe was found inside the car when officers traced it to a Lidl supermarket car park in Mackadown Lane, Tile Cross.

Chikerema confessed to killing his wife but claimed he was not of sound mind at the time and denied murder. He was found guilty this week following a trial at Birmingham Crown Court.

Detective Inspector Paul Joyce, said: "He suggested he was not of sound mind at the time of the killing and pleaded not guilty on the grounds of diminished responsibility. However, We demonstrated a degree of advanced planning – notably taking the axe out in the car that night – and the jury quickly found him guilty."

Chikerema was due to be sentenced yesterday (Wednesday).



Killer Norbert Chikerema



Victim Nyasha Kahari

Work to begin on £30m uni

PLANS for a £30 million university for engineers in Dudley will soon get under way with surveying work to begin by April.

Dudley College wants to offer degree level training in engineering, manufacturing and transport technology, providing skills needed by local firms.

The college has revealed it wants to start site investigation work on the

proposed location of the university at the town's former railway station.

A funding bid for £64,400 is expected to be approved by members of the Black Country LEP, paving the way for work to start. Black Country Consortium chief executive Sarah Middleton said: "This will provide specialist training facilities that respond directly to local industry."

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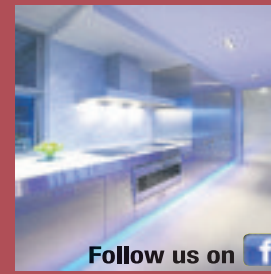
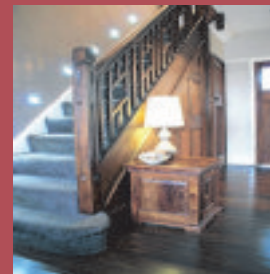


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Firm is fined £390k after welder crushed by cylinder

A FIRM has been fined £390,000 and told to pay £24,000 costs after a welder was crushed by a 2.8 ton cylinder.

Andrew King was known to be doing a potentially dangerous job when disaster struck but The Angle Ring Company had not prepared a risk assessment for it, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

The 36-year-old was using a propane lamp to weld plates onto the cylinder when it tipped forward and fell on him at the Broomfield Road, Tipton works on November 11 2014. It fractured his left leg in three places and lacerated the right leg. The injuries could have been worse if a post had not inadvertently halted the cylinder and prevented its full weight landing on him.

Mr King, who had worked at the firm for four years, said: "I shouted for help and felt blood inside by welder visor."

He was off work for nine months and is still suffering psychologically.

Warned

Sane pianist and on the road with Rea

AMERICAN pianist Mike Garson, famed for his work on David Bowie's Aladdin Sane album, will be paying tribute to Bowie at Birmingham's O2 Institute on Saturday.

The New Yorker will be playing the Aladdin Sane album in full plus other Bowie favourites with special guests Steve Harley – one of Bowie's 70 contemporaries – and Gaby Moreno.

Meanwhile, after beating pancreatic cancer and overcoming a stroke last year, rock star Chris Rea has been determined to resume his musical career with a new album and tour.

The husky-voiced Teesider famous for The Road to Hell and Driving Home for Christmas is back with his 24th album, Road Songs for Lovers, and a concert at Birmingham Symphony Hall on Wednesday, November 29.

VC war hero's grave is the last to be repaired

THE grave of a Zulu War hero will be one of the last to be restored by The Victoria Cross Trust due to lack of funding.

Colour Sergeant Anthony Booth's grave at St Michael's Church, in Brierley Hill, was initially thought to have been attacked by vandals in August this year.

More than £3,000 was raised in just a few days to help fund the restoration of it after an appeal was launched by the trust, which relies solely on donations.

It was later revealed that the grave may have been accidentally damaged during churchyard maintenance by Dudley Council.

The damage was discovered by Zulu War historian Jonathan Graham, who had visited the grave to take photographs, and he reported it to the VC Trust.



Sgt Anthony Booth

Now trust bosses state it will be their last restoration project for the time being due to 'lack of financial support'.

It comes as permission was granted by the Diocese of Worcester for work to be carried out.

Gary Stapleton, trust chief executive, said: "We

will be suspending any further work for the time being – the funds are just not there.

"We run the museum to raise the funds and despite operating in profit it is just not enough to start planning large restoration projects.

"It is annoying that rewards were put forward but then not put into the project, the crowdfunding page was a great effort but it seems the majority of that came about from the belief that it may have been criminal damage.

"This will be the last project for the time being until we have some Government funding or a kind benefactor."

Sergeant Booth was awarded the VC for saving 50 men by giving them covering fire during a retreat.



Vicar David Hoskin examines the damaged grave of Brierley Hill VC war hero Anthony Booth

Insurance industry professional in court over 13 false claims

AN insurance worker who used her industry knowledge to defraud companies out of more than £19,000 has avoided jail.

Rachel Shoer, aged 42, from Century Way, Halesowen, used fake names to set-up false insurance policies. She made 13 fraudulent claims over seven years, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

Investigators from the City of London Police discovered that Shoer followed a pattern of taking out a policy with a different insurer every year under a different name.

She admitted that because of her terrible claims history under her real name she was unable to take out home insurance and used false details to ensure she could receive insurance cover. Between 2009 and 2016, Shoer's fraudulent claims included multiple times where she used original pictures from her own wedding and 40th birthday to make claims on an engagement ring.

She had held a range of positions working in the insurance industry, and worked as an underwriter for an insurer during the time she was making the claims.

Shoer was given a 15-month sentence, suspended for two years, and a 20-hour community order after she pleaded guilty to making numerous false claims.

Police car rammed in 17-mile pursuit

A THUG rammed a police car during a 17-mile high-speed chase in a stolen van while swigging beer at the wheel, a court heard.

Leroy Scott, a father-of-two from Cradley, ignored police demands to stop, hitting speeds of up to 75mph as he sped through red lights, overtook queues of traffic and even smashed a patrol car out of the way as he raced through Dudley.

But Scott was finally came to a standstill in the wrecked van in Netherton and has been given a 14-month jail sentence after admitting dangerous driving.

The 25-minute chase started in Bridgnorth when police spotted Scott behind the wheel of the Peugeot Iveco on July 4, which was 17 days after the vehicles had been reported stolen, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

Passengers

The 40-year-old was swigging beer from a bottle as he drove, according to a police officer, said Miss Fiona Cortese, prosecuting.

Scott raced through the hamlets of Six Ashes and Enville, then the defendant, who had two passengers in the van, crossed a central reservation of the road and drove the wrong way down

By John Scott

the opposite carriageway.

Police tried to stop Scott in Duncan Edwards Way, Dudley, but he rammed one of the police cars. The van finally stopped in Cinder Bank.

Scott refused to take a breath test. He had 21 previous convictions involving 52 separate offences to do with vehicles.

Mr Daniel White, defending, conceded: "He has had difficulties with drink and drugs."

Scott from Severn Road, Colley Gate, admitted dangerous driving and failing to answer bail.

Judge Barry Berlin told him: "This was an utterly shocking piece of driving that put the police, other road users, your passengers and yourself at risk."

Scott will also face a five year driving ban on his release.

Volunteers needed

WE need more – that's the message from Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust as it marks the recruitment of its 200th volunteer.

The Volunteer Service has been building up a team of recruits to help around its sites, which include Sandwell, City and Rowley Regis Hospitals, as well as Leasowes Intermediate Care Centre.

The service aims to reach a target of 460 recruits by next September. Liza Gill, volunteers co-ordinator, said: "We have a varied range of roles for volunteers within the trust and we intend on increasing their presence across all sites over the coming months. There will also be an opportunity for volunteers at the Midland Metropolitan Hospital, when it opens in 2019.Call 0121 507 4855 for further details.

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Whole lotta love for Rob as rocker comes home

Robert Plant, Wolverhampton Civic Hall
GREAT to see two Midlands rock icons back together, Robert Plant and Wolves Civic. The legends are in action again, both the venue and the Black Country's home grown rock god.

There is always something special about a Plant gig in Wolverhampton, just a George Berry clearance kick away from his beloved Molineux and back with his people, where references to Tipton and the Arboretum are fully understood. They were queuing back to Queen Square to get into this sold out concert.

The former Led Zeppelin frontman even had his Auntie Gwen in the audience, on Monday who he thanked for taking him to the Gaumont to see such acts as Bo Diddley, the Everly Brothers and some young band called The Rolling Stones. "I didn't like them," he quipped. Take that Jagger.

There is a certain wistfulness about Plant's new album Carry Fire, reflected in his comment to the audience: "Three score and nine is a funny place to be."

Reunion

No longer the snake-hipped Adonis, more elder statesman, but he is always looking forward rather than surviving on past glories.

Long-time fans may bemoan the diminishing likelihood of another Led Zep reunion but they can enjoy plenty of compensation in the stomping folk-rock of his band The Sensational Space Shifters, here boosted by the inclusion



Robert Plant sang songs from his solo albums and Led Zeppelin classics

of top folk singer and fiddler Seth Lakeman, who became an honorary Space Shifter after his support set. The two guitarists, Skin Tyson and Justin Adams, were exceptional.

Opening with New World from the new album, followed by Turn It Up from 2014's Lullaby and the Ceaseless Roar, Plant then turned the clock back to 1970 for the ballad That's The Way from Led Zeppelin III.

Other Led Zep classics were to follow, Gallows Pole, Misty Mountain Hop and Babe I'm Gonna Leave You

in a set marked by some outstanding covers, including Bukka White's Fixin' To Die and a radical revamp of traditional tune Little Maggie.

It had to end with an epic and so fans were treated to Whole Lotta Love, which he blended with folk song Santa Anna, as the final encore after a one hour and 45 minutes show.

Just to hear the most famous riff in rock again sent a shiver down the spine and sent the audience home happy.

LEON BURAKOWSKI

“With my story I want to inspire people who are in an abyss because of their teeth. I looked for help from the Denture Clinic and it's been a journey full of professionalism, kindness and thanks go to everyone who played their part in restoring my smile and ability to enjoy life again.”

ATTRACTIVE, bubbly, confident and with a contagious laugh – there are simply not enough descriptive words to capture in a single sentence the experience of meeting professional chef, **Jacky Standish**.

Looking younger than her 57 years, Jacky has engaged on an unusual “bucket list”, though she’s quick to point out: “I’m definitely not dying. Quite the opposite!”

For the dog-lover, who confesses “she doesn’t know who to smile at first,” the list all about making up for lost time.

It’s hard to imagine, this woman who laughs easily and is generous with her smiles, would ever want for anything, but reflecting on recent years she admits “there’s plenty of catching up to be done.”

Relaxing over a coffee, the former chef and house manager to Hagley Hall’s Lord and Lady Cobham, explains that enduring decades of teeth troubles left her battling with some very dark days before receiving

implant treatment at North Street Dental and Implant Clinic in Dudley.

“I was deeply ashamed of my teeth. I could cook fabulous meals for the rich and famous who regularly visited the hall. But for my own pleasure with food, it was becoming a nightmare as I found it more and

more difficult to eat the meals I prepared.

“My bucket list . . . all the places I want to eat out,” she muses, “and I just might cook at home and throw a dinner party . . . that sounds terribly old fashioned, doesn’t it,” she adds.

“I always used to find meals out with family and friends quite daunting and felt my presence compromised those with whom I was out. Of course, they’d have

to find a restaurant with a menu offering something I could chew,” Jacky says.

Jacky, suffered with periodontal (gum) disease for decades. “I was informed by my family dentist I would experience dental issues throughout my life.

“At one point I was attending the den-

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Jacqueline Standish Nov. 2017

Can't stop smiling!

How chef to rich and famous found 'ingredients' for a new life



visit www.denture-clinic.co.uk and follow the link to view Jacky's 'reveal' videos

A transformed Jacqueline showing off her beautifully crafted new smile with her pre-treatment look inset

tists every three months to try and control the problems, but no matter how I tried, as the years passed I lost more and more teeth,” she recalls.

Jacky’s confidence plummeted so badly she would walk her dog at 5am to avoid meeting people. “By my mid-50s the erosion on my confidence was as severe as the erosion on my gums,” she says,

Now, with four implants retaining an upper overdenture and a partial lower traditional prosthetic, she’s thrilled with her

new smile. “No-one would ever know they are not my natural teeth. Out with my dog, I can now speak to people and ask ‘what sort of dog have you got on your lead?’”

Now look at me!

Jacky, who recently renovated her newly-purchased bungalow, adds: “Everything was finished except a makeover of the front garden. I could have paid to have it done, but decided to invest in my teeth. It was no good having a front garden when

you have no front teeth.” The surgery was carried out by North Street’s implant dentist Owain Rees BDS DGDGP (UK) Dip Imp Dent (UCL) GDC 61576.

Summing up her experience Jacky concluded: “I wake up feeling remarkably good, my jaw sore from all the smiling. I came for an initial consultation with Steven [practice principal Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS Eng GDC 108353] and I could hardly lift my head up.

“Now look at me!”

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Former conductor Gerry back on the buses at 100



Former bus conductor Michael 'Gerry' Byrne with his family and the National Express bus named after him

IT'S an honour given to few but then Michael 'Gerry' Byrne already has a special place in bus history.

The great-grandfather, who has just turned 100, was the last bus conductor in Stourbridge, and his former bosses decided to mark his milestone birthday by naming a bus after him.

Mr Byrne and his family were invited to the National Express bus

depot in West Bromwich for the unveiling.

The bus company also made a plaque commemorating the occasion.

It was presented to him at his birthday party at the Stourbridge Institute last month when the surprise was revealed.

The former Midland Red employee, a father-of-eight, worked on the buses for more than 30 years.

He covered routes as far afield as Bridgnorth, Worcester and Birmingham but preferred the local runs to

neighbourhoods like Pedmore Fields, Wollaston Farm and the Norton Estate. Gerry said: "It was hard work for conductors being on your feet all day but you could sit and have a chat with passengers if it wasn't busy."

Bryan Bannister, the company's group communications manager, said: "We were delighted to do this for him."

Originally from County Limerick in Ireland, Gerry moved to Stourbridge in 1943 and worked as a bus conductor for Midland Red from 1948 until 1979, later working at Mecca Bingo on the

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Railway complaints 'are not surprising', says MP

COMPLAINTS over railway services are 'disappointing' but not 'surprising', says Stourbridge MP Margot James. New figures revealed Virgin Trains West Coast and Arriva Trains Wales, which both run through the region, were two of the most complained about operators.

Cross Country and London Midlands also came in for criticism. The Stourbridge Conservative MP, who is also the minister for small business, said: "It is disappointing to see the rail operators in this region being some of the most complained about, although I am not totally surprised.

Campaign by markets is the real deal

MARKETS and car boot sales have joined a national campaign to ensure goods sold are legitimate and visitors are not ripped off.

In the run-up to Christmas, Staffordshire County Council's trading standards team is urging more to get on board. The campaign aims to promote a fair and safe trading environment, including ensuring markets are free from counterfeit goods.

The campaign brings together councils, market operators, traders, industry groups and copyright and trademark owners.

Car boot organisers at Ashwood, near Kinver, and Stourbridge Rugby Club have signed up to the Real Deal campaign, alongside markets in Cannock, Penkridge and Lichfield.

For more information go to www.realdealmarkets.co.uk

"These figures are, however, from a period that is normally quieter on the trains. If these figures were for the months running up to Christmas, they could have been much worse.

Capacity

"In terms of the complaints about London Midland's services, I am not surprised to see punctuality and capacity being key issues, indeed they are problems that the Chase Line passengers have suffered, particularly at this time of year."

Virgin Trains West Coast received 158 complaints per 100,000 passenger journeys from April to June. The service runs from Birmingham to Scotland stopping at Wolverhampton and Stafford.

Arriva Trains Wales had 106 complaints made per 100,000 journeys during the same period. The German-based firm operates the Wales and Border line, which starts from Birmingham and stops at Smethwick Galton Bridge and Wolverhampton. It will cease running the service in October next year.

City still confident on winning Games bid



How the Alexandra Stadium could look if it stages the Commonwealth Games

THE Black Country could play a greater role in the 2022 Commonwealth Games than first thought if Birmingham's bid to host it is successful.

Officials behind the Second City's bid have said they remain confident of staging the Games, despite concerns about its package.

Birmingham City Council's interim chief executive Stella Manzie did not rule out the prospect of the Black Country becoming more involved in

the event at a meeting of the region's Local Enterprise Partnership.

She was asked by her counterpart in Walsall, Helen Paterson, about the town hosting judo as it is home to the sport's centre of excellence.

Ms Manzie also raised the possibility of some athletes being based in the Black Country, as well as the launch of fan zones.

But she added the region's main involvement was likely to be swimming

and diving, with a multi-million aquatic centre lined up for Smethwick.

Ms Manzie said: "The big gain in the Black Country will be in relation to the aqua centre."

Ms Manzie admitted there were still some 'issues' over funding for the bid, which must be submitted by November 30.

She said: "There are still some issues around that but they are in hand."

Hashtag used in thanks to medical staff

A HEART-WARMING hashtag has showcased respect for ambulance services after backlash to a rude note left on an emergency vehicle.

People in the Black Country have used #BlueLightHappy in tweets to thank paramedics for their work.

Hassan Shabbir, aged 27, left a note on an ambulance telling them not to block his drive while paramedics were attending a man who was throwing up blood. He later apologised.

Other recent incidents saw a paramedic being headbutted, while a police car had its windscreen smashed during a remembrance service.

A paramedic from the West Midlands Ambulance Service and the brains behind the hashtag, Robert Moore, said he wanted to increase the morale of emergency services. He said: "I feel like there has been an increased number of reports of negative behaviour towards my colleagues.

"In the last month I have been spat at and punched in the chest and these are things that shouldn't happen."

@999Tina wrote: 'I had a lovely Dudley crew come out to me to take a trip up to Russells Hall! #team999 #BlueLightHappy'.

@J x Jazze wrote: 'Amazing professionals who helped my sister when I found her semi-conscious at home #BlueLightHappy'.

Soap actor turns on festive lights

CORONATION Street star Antony Cotton will switch on the Christmas lights in Stourbridge this weekend.

The actor, who plays Sean Tully, will flick the switch at around 5pm on Saturday near the town clock. He will host a meet and greet session in Chicago's, before joining Santa and elves on stilts at the Ryemarket.

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Spice is just right as curry crowned best

RESTAURANTS have cooked up award-winning recipes to be named the Express & Star's top Indian Restaurants of the Year for the Dudley borough.

Balti Dilshad, in Stourbridge, and Robby's, in Kingswinford, impressed judges with their service and dedication to the community. First place Balti Dilshad was left celebrating after scooping the award for the Dudley borough's restaurant of the year after spending 35 years at the heart of the community.

The family-run business has put its successes down to the community and making customers feel at home.

Manager Malik Miah, said: "I think we've won because of the establishment we've got

there and the community that know us and the service that we provide.

"It's been a family-owned business now for years, about 36 years. I've been there since childhood part-time, then full-time, then slowly taking over basically. The people that we've got in our restaurant all know each other, it's like a little family kind of thing there." The restaurant, which offers a range of specials and diet-orientated meals, caters for birthdays, Christmas parties and prides itself on being open every day of the year.

Mr Miah added: "Thank you to the locals for voting for us and we're ready to welcome them whenever."



Balti Dilshad manager Malik Miah, winner of the Dudley Indian Restaurant of the Year

Andy Maxwell, Express & Star circulation sales manager, said: "Well done for all the hard work involved in achieving the awards. Winners, runners-up and third places should all be excited with their success."

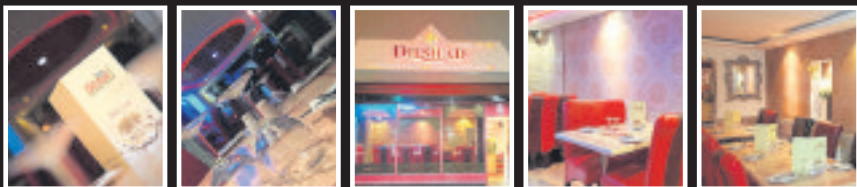
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EX-Baggies captain's medal sells for £24,000

A RARE and precious gold medal awarded to former Albion captain Jesse Pennington sold for £24,000 – three times the sum expected.

The West Bromwich-born left back, affectionately known as 'Peerless Pennington', was 36 when he led the Baggies to their historic first league title in 1920.

Before the sale at Graham Budd Auctions, Mr Pennington's Football League title medal had been expected to sell for between £6,000 and £8,000. It was the most valuable item among 50 of his mementoes, including medals, caps and gold pocket watch, which sold for a total of £82,870 at the auction.

The 1920 FA Charity Shield medal Mr Pennington won with Albion sold for £6,500, six times the expected price, while the 1911-1912 FA Cup runners-up medal Mr Pennington won fetched £7,000.

Fashion

The medals were part of one of the finest Albion collections ever to go under the hammer.

Pennington's £24,000 medal is engraved: The Football League Champions Division 1, West Bromwich Albion F.C. 1919-20, J. Pennington, captain.

Albion didn't simply win the league title that season, they won it in record-breaking fashion. Their 104 goals in 42 league matches and their points total of 60 set new records.

In 1919-1920 there were only 44 teams in the Football League – 22 teams in the First Division and 22 teams in the Second Division. Wolves were in the Second Division that season. Pennington made 455 league appearances for Albion and he also



Albion's Jesse Pennington



A Baggies badge in the sale



Gold league winners medal

played 25 times for England. In his final international, in 1920, he captained England when he was 36 and 231 days making him, at that time, England's oldest capped outfield player.

In a poll conducted in 2004 to mark Albion's 125th anniversary, Pennington was named as one of the club's 16 greatest players.

He was born at West Bromwich on August 23, 1883, and died in 1970,

aged 87. His parents, William and Mary Ann Pennington, were also born at West Bromwich. William Pennington was an iron worker. In the 1901 census, Jesse is described as a hammer driver but that was before he took up football full time.

West Bromwich Albion confirmed it did not purchase the medals and said it was not aware of its members had decided to bid for the memorabilia.

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Hark back to Victorian era over Christmas

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES

with John Ridgway of Perry & Phillips



I WAS reminded this week just how popular Victoriana continues to be when the Bridgnorth Players approached me looking for props to use in their forthcoming production of the Dickens classic A Christmas Carol.

The charm of the Victorian era is seemingly ever-lasting.

We tend to forget how grim it must have truly been in poverty-stricken areas during that time and remember only the pretty things!

And I must admit it was a time for elaborate decoration in terms of almost everything, from clothing to furniture.

Almost anything Victorian has a place in modern homes, from kitchen items to dining tables and chairs.

Blue and white china tea-sets, dinner services, soup tureens and covered dishes all look good on display in a kitchen.

The Victorians loved lace and used it for a variety of purposes – you can still buy tablecloths, napkins, valences, pillow cases, nightdress cases and numerous other items with lace decoration in excellent condition.

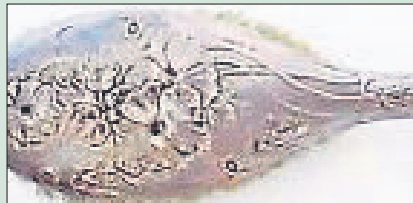
Silver-backed hairbrush sets and wooden jewellery boxes look great in a modern bedroom and silver candlesticks add an elegant touch to any room.

Prints and mirrors can again add a little vintage charm around the home and items used in a Victorian bathroom, such as soap dishes, towel rails and even porcelain inhalers, can have a new lease of life on display in a contemporary bath or shower room.

Good quality Victorian furniture can really complement a modern room setting, look out for pretty occasional tables and chaises.

And of course the more quirky items sell well – a top hat, a parasol or a silver-topped walking cane look charming in a modern hallway for example.

- Perry and Phillips hold valuation days, for sale items only, every Wednesday from 10am until 4pm.
- The next Perry and Phillips sale of antiques and collectables takes place at the Mill Street saleroom in Low Town, Bridgnorth on Tuesday, December 5 – our Christmas auction. Viewing will be during the weekend and on Monday and also from 10am on auction day
- New sale bidders are advised to attend the sale-room early on auction day to register and be allocated a bidding number.
- Perry and Phillips hold sales on the first Tuesday of every other month.



Uniforms remain a huge part of our daily lives



Military uniforms worn for parades

THE uniform is a way of belonging, being part of a group, team or organisation. It can inspire trust, build morale or even instil fear.

Today we see uniforms everywhere, even wearing your favourite football team strip is a form of belonging.

Delivery company drivers wear a uniform so we know they are an official part of the company they work for, fast food outlets ensure staff are neatly dressed in matching outfits and factory workers wear clothing that protects them and may also define their position.

Most businesses cannot run smoothly without this conformity. We are more comfortable when employees are dressed in uniform, it gives us more confidence in products and service and most customer facing jobs require a uniform.

Military uniform is still very distinctive, the first military uniform traces back to 210BC in China and the terracotta warriors. This clothing was originally provided to identify your own army and your enemy during bat-

STYLE FOCUS

with Janet Timmis



tle and definition of the rank system. Modern uniform is much more technical and practical for its intended use and protection against the dangers of today. Each country has its own design and even different camouflage patterns. Dress uniform has not changed and is still worn for ceremonial occasions.

Authority uniform includes, police, firefighters, rescue workers, traffic wardens, judges, nurses and doctors. Their uniform may change dependant on the area in which they work but they are still noticeable and obvious to us. Many uniforms need to conform to very specific health and safety requirements and cannot be worn in certain environments without meeting very strict compliance rules.

School uniform, supermarket staff, prison garb, brownies, cubs, guides and scouts, religious group members, airline staff and flight attendants, commodity traders, chefs, motor-

ing rescue patrolmen and chauffeurs wear distinctive garments so we can immediately note who they are. We are surrounded by this conformity.

In fashion we have seen, glam rockers, skin-heads, punks, and many more music based cultures throughout the years that define an era with the clothing worn by its followers.

Sport is very important in our society, the professionals earning high pay-outs for winning.

Each sport has its own particular clothing requirement and inspires a huge following, this too is a type of uniform, showing a belonging with no definition of age, standing in society or financial position.

Most of us will wear some type of uniform for work or leisure. Look around you and take note of how many different uniforms there are and how familiar they are to us. It is also a fantastic way of advertising our businesses, charities and events. It is a huge part of our day-to-day lives.

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A third of the shoppers will overspend – just to qualify for free delivery



Make sure the thrill of a bargain doesn't lead to a debt hangover

Avoid costly shopping mistakes at Christmas

THOSE festive special offers might look tempting, but a little bit of preparation now could help you avoid costly shopping regrets.

It's that time of year again – when people prepare to roll up their sleeves and take part in shopping frenzies such as Black Friday.

But before you start shelling out, pause for a moment and consider whether you could be a little more savvy with your cash. Are you really going after the best bargains? Will you regret splashing out too much come January?

Here are seven things you need to know before starting your Christmas shopping...

1. Is it really a bargain?

Just because a shop is advertising 'mega discounts', is the item you're after really cheaper than it would be at another time of year? Do some homework now, when you're less under pressure to have Christmas all wrapped up - and you'll have a better idea later on if you're really getting a great deal.

2. Can you take it back?

Snot up on your consumer rights. While there are general rules, it's worth asking stores about their individual policies when it comes to 'goodwill' returns if you simply change your mind. The Consumer Rights Act spells out consumers' rights to refunds on faulty items and makes it easier to challenge hidden fees and charges.

3. How you pay can give you added protections if anything goes wrong

Consumer group Which? explains that under section 75

By Victoria Shaw

of the Consumer Credit Act, your credit card company is jointly liable if something goes wrong with a product or a service you've paid for with that card.

If you've spent more than £100 and less than £30,000 on something, you can claim in this way if something goes wrong. You don't have to have paid the full amount on your credit card, either. Which? says to qualify for the protections, it's the value of the goods you're buying that is key, not the amount paid on the card.

4. Check the website you're buying from is genuine

Myles Dawson, UK country manager at Adyen, which processes payments, says with many limited-period deals on offer, shoppers may be tempted to let their guard down. "It helps to stick to retailers you know are reputable. That is not to say that any online retailer you haven't heard of should be on the black list, but take the time to do a little research and look for reviews," he says.

"Checking your emails carefully is also crucial. Fraudsters are becoming increasingly sophisticated at mimicking legitimate retailers. They know it's easy for you to get caught in the moment when a great offer lands in your inbox.

"Take a few moments to check the email address of the sender is legitimate and look closely at the destination of a link, before clicking it. This helps avoid ending up on a spoofed website and mistakenly providing your card details and personal information to fraudsters."

5. Factor in delivery charges

Two-thirds (67 per cent) of shoppers say they would not be willing to buy online if the delivery costs are too high, according to a survey by delivery management company Whistl.

Some online stores offer free delivery for shoppers who spend over a certain amount when making a purchase.

And while it may be considered quite cheeky, a third of the shoppers surveyed admitted they will overspend – knowing they will later send some items back – just to qualify for free delivery.

Patience can help cut delivery costs.

Half (50 per cent) of those surveyed would be willing to wait an extra two to three days in exchange for free delivery – while more than a quarter (28 per cent) would wait four to five days longer.

6. Will your shopping spree put you in debt?

Make sure the thrill of a bargain doesn't lead to a debt hangover. Set a budget, and if you're paying by credit card, pay it off in full before any charges apply.

Keep track of your account balance – busting an overdraft limit could also make a purchase very expensive, once you factor in those bank charges.

7. Cut the costs

Voucher and cashback websites can help trim back costs. And if you don't mind risking someone else snapping it up, try leaving your item in your online shopping basket and see if the store tries to nudge you by emailing a discount code.

It does happen!

Dave hits right chord to back appeal



Flamboyant Slade rocker Dave Hill is backing the Chronicle and Express & Star's Feed a Family campaign

IN the words of that famous song, 'It's Christmaaas!', and now Slade guitarist is following on from those heady days of his band's domination of the festive season, by backing our Feed a Family This Christmas appeal.

Dave said he would be backing the Chronicle's sister paper, the Express & Star, with its festive appeal to support the county's vulnerable at Christmas.

The 71-year-old added: "Anything to do with a good cause like this, I'm happy to support. It's really good that the Express & Star is doing this. "

We are collecting donations of non-perishable food which will be handed to food banks and other charitable organisations across the region.

THE DROP-OFF POINTS:

Express & Star Wolverhampton, 51-53 Queen Street, WV1 1ES; Express & Star Cannock/Walsall office, Queen Square, Cannock WS11 1EA; Oldbury office, Black Country House, Rounds Green Road, Oldbury, B69 2DG.

DONATIONS CAN ALSO BE DROPPED OFF AT:

Waitrose Wolverhampton, Penn Road, WV2 4NJ; The Midcounties Co-operative Food Store Codsall, 28-32 Wood Lane/Bakers Way, Codsall WV8 1DB. Donations dropped off at those will go to The Well.



Readers can donate festive food, , as well as basics. Non-food items such as toiletries, baby supplies, new socks and small presents are also welcome.

Good causes set to benefit are The Well (Home of Wolverhampton Food Bank), Wolverhampton's the Good

Shepherd Ministry, the Black Country Food Bank, the Smethwick Food Bank, Walsall North Food Bank and Cannock and District Food Bank.

The appeal will also support The Haven, which helps women and children affected by domestic violence.

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Try a more natural way of dozing off at night

IT'S one of the more frustrating things in life: The night before an important event or big day, where you desperately need to feel rested, you simply can't switch off and fall asleep, writes LIZ CONNOR.

So instead of waking up refreshed, you're frustrated, stressed and groggier than ever – before the day's even begun. If this sounds like a familiar scenario, you can at least take comfort in the fact you're not alone. The Sleep Health Foundation estimates one in three of us have at least mild insomnia at some point in our lives, and at any given time, approximately 10 per cent of the population's suffering with it.

According to the NHS, occasional episodes of insomnia may come and go without causing any serious problems, but for some people, it can last for months or even years at a time. And sleep deprivation isn't just a recipe for a painful and unproductive Monday morning – it can be also be really detrimental to your health.

Studies have shown that regularly missing out on a solid eight hours' slumber can put you at risk of serious conditions, including obesity, heart disease and diabetes, and chronic poor sleep is also associated with a shortened life expectancy.

When you're tossing and turning all night, it can be tempting to reach for over-the-counter or prescription drugs to help you to drift off. However, if these aren't a suitable option, or you're simply keen to avoid popping sleeping pills, don't despair. A new school of thinking is turning away from the medicine cabinet, looking instead at more organic and holistic sleep aids. Two powerful weapons in the fight against insomnia are a quiet, comfortable sleep environment and a relaxing bedtime routine, but here are five other natural approaches that can help you on your way...

1. Invest in a sunrise lamp

Getting a good night's sleep could be as simple as changing the lighting in your room. The blue light from electronic devices can delay the release of sleep-inducing melatonin, so make your bedroom a phone-free zone and invest in a sunrise lamp like Lumie's Bodyclock Luxe 700, £170 (lumie.com). It has a bedtime option that mimics a real sunset, gradually dimming the light in your room over a 30-minute period, stimulating melatonin production and its all-important sleepy effect.

2. Bathe in magnesium

Magnesium has long been touted as a homeopathic way to help relieve insomnia. Studies have found it helps decrease cortisol, the 'stress hormone' that can keep you up at night.

It also helps muscles relax, to bring on that yawn-inducing feeling at the end of a long day. If you don't fancy swilling it down in capsule form, you could try taking a hot bath with BetterYou Magnesium Flakes, from £3.49 (betteryou.com).

3. Slather on a sleep lotion

Parenting forums and beauty blogs have all been buzzing with the sleep-giving benefits of Lush's Sleepy Body Lotion, £13.95 (uk.lush.com) – some reviewers have even gone as far to claim that it has managed to cure their insomnia completely. The pale purple lotion utilises a potent mix of oatmeal, cocoa butter and lavender water – a natural relaxant with mood-altering properties. Slather on a layer before bedtime, paying particular attention to the neck and temples for a deeper, more fulfilling sleep.

4. Sip on some chamomile tea

A good cup of tea is just what the doctor ordered when sleep won't come - just don't touch the English Breakfast. Chamomile has been used for centuries for its medicinal properties, in particular its ability to help you relax. Just one cuppa of the stuff can have a mild sedative effect, as well as the added benefit of being helpful in alleviating menstrual cramps.

5. Tune into pink noise

You've probably heard of white noise – which is basically a consistent, fuzzy, static sound that has a masking effect, blocking out the sudden changes in noise that can disturb light sleepers. Pink noise goes one step further, slowing down your brainwaves and helping regulate them, giving you a steady, long sleep.



Tropical Palm Wall Mural, £36 per square metre, Murals Wallpaper



Rasch Log Pattern Wallpaper Rustic Wood Stripe Motif Faux Effect, £16.99, I Want Wallpaper

Wake up your walls with hottest wallpaper looks

By Gabrielle Fagan

WALLS – like presents – look their best when well-wrapped. And there's now a huge choice of wallpapers out there, so they can shimmer, sparkle or stun with texture, pattern and colour.

Papering a single feature wall, or a whole room, is also a 'fast' way to embrace a trend. After all, we're increasingly following home fashion just as closely we do clothes – and a winning combination of cutting-edge digital technology and brilliant designs makes it possible to literally transform a setting with just a roll of paper.

Here, three experts in the field reveal their wallpaper wisdom and trend predictions for the year ahead...

Create drama and personality

"Wallpaper has observed tradition for too long and people are starting to acknowledge its potential in their homes," says Catherine Jacob, head of design at Murals Wallpaper, who offers a range of designs and can create bespoke wall murals from images, designs or photographs supplied by customers.

"Generally, patterns are becoming more daring, with large-scale dark florals, jungle prints and bright coloured geometrics enlivening the landscape of walls once dominated by a conventional neutral palette of paint."

For 2018, she predicts large-scale images or repeat patterns will offer a punchy alternative to the small, ditsy patterns of yesteryear.

"Millennial pink reigns as the new black and has become a staple base colour, but lilac tones are gaining popularity," Catherine adds.

"Faux texture wallpapers are recognised as a brilliant way to change the character of a space, with brick for a rustic look or concrete for a chic industrial feel, or even wool for softer luxury. The craft/handmade movement is inspiring design, so look out for more free-flowing painterly styles, merging the look of artisan skills with digital-age technology."

Top tip: To enhance a setting and ensure a beautiful wall covering is the focus of a room, pick out key colours from the design and repeat them in plain fabrics and painted woodwork.

Play with pattern

"These days, people can choose a look which totally reflects their personality and taste. Whether you prefer a bold colour palette with pops of bright colour, linear or geometric patterns, or shimmering metallics, there's literally something for everyone," says Paula Taylor, colour and trends specialist for Graham & Brown.

"For 2018, we've identified key trends which form the backdrop to our new collections. We're focusing on raw beauty – tac-



Graham & Brown's 'Wallpaper of the Year' for 2018, Pierre



Bugs Silver Wallpaper, £50 a roll, Graham & Brown

tility, texture and fresh white forms, which bring purity to a home – think weaves, cane work and wood grain with layered, natural finishes.

"We're also honing in on gentle, subdued shades, such as millennial pink, arctic blue and cool heather, as well as offering dramatic, dark backdrops."

Shimmer and texture

"The trend for people to be brave with

pattern and embrace colour will continue into 2018," promises Alex Whitecroft, head of design at I Want Wallpaper.

"The popularity of floral patterns endures and classic patterns are getting an update, with new printing techniques and a fresh focus on detail and larger-scale patterns. A pink/purple palette will be the top favourite."

"The trend to bring the 'outdoors in',



Blue Heron Wallpaper Mural, £36sq m. Murals Wallpaper

with the adoption of botanical and tropical looks, will evolve even further. There are so many fabulous ways to incorporate this look, from subtle embossed palm leaves to bold and bright tropical prints."

"Industrial papers mimicking the look of natural materials will continue to be popular, with earthy tones and dark woods taking over from the pale, blonde Scandinavian-style which is now waning."

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Oh brother! Twigs were hot to trot

The Lemon Twigs/Flyte, O2 Institute 2, Birmingham
LONDON band Flyte, who've already played Wolverhampton and Birmingham venues in their own right this year, only had a half hour support slot in which to impress, and impress they did with carefully crafted pop songs from their hugely promising debut album *The Loved Ones*.

They have a fine voiced frontman in Will Taylor, though all four play a part vocally with Fleet Foxes-like close harmonies showcased by their a capella version of Alvvays' *Archie*, Marry Me. Highlights included the singles *Victoria Falls* and *Cathy Come Home* plus '80s flavoured *Sliding Doors*. The Lemon Twigs, a New York quartet based around brothers Brian and Michael D'Addario, former Broadway stage kids, are brash, bizarre and brilliant.

Their music is a theatrical take on '70s rock. The first half was fronted by long-haired Brian, a slick and confident singer/guitarist whilst brother Michael bashed the hell out of the drum kit like a latter day Keith Moon. Midway through the 70 minute set, siblings swap places and it becomes apparent that Michael is an unabashed showman akin to Iggy Pop, high kicking and turkey trotting around the stage, climbing and leaping off the speakers. Highlights included *These Words* and *Why Didn't You Say That?*

LEON BURAKOWSKI



Blondie's Debbie Harry on stage at the Birmingham Arena.

Pic: Aden Southall

Bee in her bonnet, but Blondie fans in Rapture

CONCERT REVIEWS

Blondie, Arena Birmingham

NEVER one to be low key she appeared on stage wearing a white cape with the F word on the back – relating to the planet – and two large furry bees in her hair – not real I hasten to add.

This was Debbie Harry's stand for the bee population, very appropriate as her latest album is called *Pollinator*. Well Blondie certainly did get the crowd buzzing from the off.

There was no point in settling into our seats as the packed Arena was on its feet as soon as she appeared on stage, and for nearly two hours she took us through her old and new hits.

Kicking off with *One Way Or Another* she soon invited the audience to sing along, a little bit too often for my liking as she just kept holding out the mic to the fans. Fine, but I had gone there to hear her sing not them.

At the age of 72, and dressed very simply in a white shirt and trousers and a sort of black tie/scarf there was still a glimpse of

those fabulous cheekbones. Ruffling up her hair frequently – very blonde of course – she soon dispensed with her dark glasses and paid attention to her favourite fan, the electric one on the floor in front of her which she fiddled with.

I am not sure if she was too warm or just liked the breeze in her hair for the wind-swept look.

Her voice was a bit shaky at first but got stronger as the night went on and the fans – of all ages, many not even a twinkle in the eye when she was at her height of fame, lapped it up.

Alongside the newer songs she turned the clock back with *Dreaming*, *Call Me*, *Union City Blue* and many more. A great night. Thanks for the memories, Debbie. She will probably still be Atomic at 80.

SUE ATTWATER



Dave Gahan in action with Depeche Mode at Arena Birmingham on Sunday night

They're still in the Mode

Depeche Mode, Arena Birmingham

WHAT a strange long road it's been for Depeche Mode, from perky 80s synth kids to gnarly rock gods of the 21st century, and their army of fans has kept on growing.

With the Brum mega-venue full to capacity and covering quite an age range, it's a testament to the dark melodic appeal of the Mode that they still feel vital and current whilst many of their '80s contemporaries rely on the nostalgia circuit.

The original Essex trio of singer Dave Gahan, singer-guitarist Martin L Gore and keyboardist Andy Fletcher have been augmented into a five-piece band, who put on performance that packed a punch, if let down somewhat by the staging.

A video wall that spent some of the night in darkness, also leaving a gantry where Gahan strutted his stuff in shadows, meant that those at the back of the venue must have had to peer hard to catch a glimpse of the group through the dry ice haze.

But they will have heard them loud and clear with a powerhouse performance of songs spanning four decades, right up to and including this year's album *Spirit*, their 14th studio album.

Oddly the new album only contributed

three songs to the two-hour gig, including opener *Going Backwards*, but perhaps that's because the band have such a huge back catalogue to choose from.

Tattooed front man Gahan was in fine form, pirouetting and preening, in constant motion and exercising that resonant mellow vocal. He's grown distinctly Johnny Depp-like as he's got older, can rock a waistcoat like no other and his supple moves make him a walking advert for the benefits of yoga.

He did share vocal duties with chief songwriter Gore, who stepped into the limelight for *Insight*, the classic *Home* (both from 1997's *Ultra* album) and first encore *Strangelove*.

The fans, including thousands standing in the lower arena, loved the inclusion of 1983 hit *Everything Counts* and 1984's *Stripped*. But it was the tracks from seminal 1990 album *Violator* and 93's *Songs of Faith and Devotion* that really got the arena rocking with *In Your Room*, *Walking in My Shoes*, an extended version of *Enjoy the Silence* and final encore *Personal Jesus*, which got the whole arena roaring 'reach out and touch faith'.

LEON BURAKOWSKI

She-Wolf snarl of the UK's best band

Wolf Alice, O2 Academy, Birmingham

AS members of Wolf Alice surveyed a hot and heaving full-to-the-brim venue after a blistering 80-minute set they must have thought: It doesn't get much better than this.

I have seen the quartet go from third on the bill, main support, small hall bill toppers, to become the best young rock band in the UK.

If debut album 2015's *My Love Is Cool* was good, this year's *Visions Of A Life* is great. Songs from both featured at a gig that will have satisfied original fans and those that have come on board more recently.

Ellie Rowsell has become a force of nature, her voice running the full gamut from whisper to scream via she-devil snarl.

The mosh pit revelled in *Yuk Foo* and *You're A Germ*, fans loved the drama of *Formidable* *Cool* and angular charm of *Beautifully Unconventional*. Rock epic *Visions Of A Life* showed why they will hold their own with metal monsters like *Ozzy Osbourne* at the *Download Festival Paris* next summer.

Earlier, homecoming heroes *Superfood* impressed with funky grooves (as heard on new album *Bambino*) and got the joint jumping with *Double Dutch*. New York trio *Sunflower Bean*'s neo-psychedelic swirl has a new swagger and a confident frontwoman in Julia Cumming. **LB**

ANTON SINGS A DIFFERENT TUNE

INSIDE

THEATRE + MUSIC + PUZZLES + TV GUIDE

Advertisement feature

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Why Anton's in the mood for singing

We start with a moment described perfectly accurately and unlassciviously on YouTube as this: Ruth Langford rides Anton

Du Beke.

For those just back from a long holiday in Outer Mongolia, we'll recap. At the start of the month, Strictly's Anton Du Beke unexpectedly found himself pinned to the ground beneath the beautiful, perfectly-manicured Singapore-born presenter. And then she sort of wriggled a bit. And shimmied. Jeez.

Anton laughs. No doubt he's recounted that moment dozens of times, but he's game again this morning. Was he horrified when the two of them went down?

He laughs again. "No, I told Ruth it had been her best move."

There's a pause. Then we both laugh. "It was one of those things. It was not her fault. Everything goes into slow motion when things like that happen."

"You think: 'I've got this, I'll just adjust.' Then it's 'Jesus, I don't think I've got this. And you wait for the ground to arrive at your back side.'"

Anton thought it was a hoot when it happened - and still does.

"It was hilarious. It was one of the funniest moments ever on strictly. The crowd went mad."

We have more to talk about, however, like Anton's forthcoming tour and his decision to try to emulate his Rat Pack heroes like Frank and Sammy D.

Anton, TV's most sartorial man, is The Entertainer. And in addition to tripping the light fantastic on Strictly, he's been recording a debut album in the studio, From The Top.

PASSION

"I'm so excited to announce my debut album. It's been a passion project of mine for years to be able to do something like this."

"I hope people enjoy it. I've loved every second of it. There's some old songs. Some new songs. And definitely some songs you can dance to."

It features classics like Putting On The Ritz, Fly Me To The Moon, Don't Rain On My Parade and It's The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year.

It's something he'd wanted to do forever, but took a while to bring together.

"I'm never quite sure how one gets from Point A to Point B sometimes. The same was true when I was watching Fred Astaire when I was young, I wanted to be like him but I wasn't sure of the path from a Church Hall in Kent to becoming Fred Astaire. And with music, I've never been

sure how to get from the shower to singing Fly Me To The Moon in a studio with a great producer."

Anton worked on the record with Polydor and he was delighted with their support.

"You just want someone to say to you: 'Listen, it's great, keep going.' You get self conscious and you don't really know whether it's any good. But it's been a wonderful experience."

"It's the music of my life. It's music I loved growing up with and music I danced to. Being able to sing it and get others dancing is the greatest joy."

Anton grew up watching the greats. He was enchanted by Sammy Davis Jr, Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra as well as the wonderful arrangements by Nelson Riddle and Quincy Jones. He worked with a 36-piece orchestra on his album

Best moves - Anton with Strictly dance partner Ruth Langford



to create new arrangements and the results are plain to see.

Anton is habitually tied up during the run-in to Christmas, what, with Strictly an all. But he'll be road testing some of the songs when he tours the UK from January to March.

"I'll be back on tour after the new year and I'll be coming back to the Symphony Hall in Birmingham - I do love that venue. I'll be dancing and singing, as I normally do. But if anybody's been to see me on

tour, they know I sing a bit both on Strictly and on my own tours."

"I keep saying this, I don't want it to sound odd, but the sound of the album is incredible. It's such a brilliant sound they put together in the studio."

The team who worked with Anton to produce his album blew him away. They were simultaneously supportive and honest, scrutinising everything he did to make sure he reached his potential. "I worked with a guy called Brian Rawlings, who has worked with the greats. He's done projects with Andrea Boccelli, Cher, everyone. When I went to the studio, the walls were lined with platinum discs."

It was one of the funniest moments ever on Strictly. The crowd went mad

So does Anton want to follow in those footsteps? Does he want to be lining his own walls with a bunch of silver, gold and platinum discs? You can bet he does.

"I hope it goes absolutely massive, I hope I get a platinum disc and people say it's incredible. But we'll have to wait and see whether that actually happens, we'll have to wait and see. I love it so much that I want other people to love it."

"This type of big band music is still being done and has stood the test of time. We'll have to wait and see in the future what still gets repeated in the same way from today's era. The songs I've re-recorded are great in their own right. The hard bit for me was choosing what to leave out."

In the final analysis, making people happy is what The Entertainer is all about. And he plans to keep dancing for as long as possible. "For now, I still love dancing. Doing the paso doble and samba and ripping my trousers off - I live for those moments. Or dancing with Nadiya and doing a beautiful foxtrot while Seal is singing: those are the moments you live for."

Andy Richardson

● For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.

Festive favourite The Nutcracker



Christmas cracker of a ballet is a traditional treat

Birmingham Royal Ballet's annual festive treat, The Nutcracker, opens at Birmingham Hippodrome tomorrow night (Friday).

Sir Peter Wright's magical production runs until December 13 and has been an annual seasonal tradition since the company moved from London and took on the city's name more than 25 years ago.

This world-acclaimed production with its classic story of an incredible Christmas journey, features glorious dancing and instantly recognisable romantic music from Tchaikovsky.

Join Clara as she is swept into an enchanting winter wonderland of whirling snowflakes, a handsome prince, wicked rats and a Sugar Plum Fairy.

It is spectacular with lavish costumes and

monumental sets, and amazing effects including a Christmas tree that grows before your eyes and Clara's flight on the back of a swan to a magical land.

The Nutcracker has captured the hearts and imaginations of generations of theatregoers, becoming an annual fixture at the Hippodrome, which is Birmingham Royal Ballet's home theatre. In fact, Christmas in Birmingham just wouldn't be the same without it.

In this most festive of ballets 60 dancers and a full orchestra – the Royal Ballet Sinfonia – combine to make the perfect Christmas treat for the entire family.

This production with exquisite designs by John Macfarlane is acclaimed as one of the best in the world.

Grease is still the one that you want



Grease is the word at Wolverhampton Grand where the latest tour of the much-loved rock 'n' roll musical arrives on Monday and will run until Saturday, December 2.

Tom Parker, pictured, formerly of boy band The Wanted, is making make his musical theatre debut as Danny Zuko, the role made famous in the movie by the young John Travolta.

Danielle Hope, who was Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz at the London Palladium after winning BBC TV's Over The Rainbow, will step into Olivia Newton-John's high heel shoes as Sandy.

Wisecracking Rizzo will be played by EastEnders and The Bill star Louisa Lytton, one of the youngest Strictly Come Dancing competitors in 2006. George Olney is Teen Angel/Vince Fontaine.

Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey's musical, set in an American high

school during the rock 'n' roll era, features such songs as You're The One That I Want, Summer Nights, Greased Lightnin' and Hopelessly Devoted To You. It has been choreographed by Arlene Phillips and directed by David Gilmore, who was also at the helm for stage versions of Happy Days and Footloose.

This production opened in the West End, where it had a six year run, and has toured ever since.

It's a Cruella winter at the Rep

Birmingham Rep is set for a paw-some festive season with The Hundred and One Dalmatians on stage from Thursday (November 30) to January 13. Debbie Isitt (Nativity!) adapts the family favourite story by Dodie Smith, which was turned into an animated classic by Disney. It is brought to life on stage with puppetry devised by director Tessa Walker and designer Jamie Vartan. Former Birmingham student Gloria Onitiri, above, makes her Rep debut as wicked Cruella de Vil.



Rag'N'Bone Man is only Human at Civic

One of the breakout stars of 2017, Rag'N'Bone Man, has sold out the Civic Hall on Monday for his first Wolverhampton gig. Without doubt 2017 has been his year, emerging from the Brighton music scene, his debut album has been a huge hit worldwide, containing the international hit Human, which went to Number 1 on iTunes in more than 40 countries. The harmonious sound of America folk-rockers Fleet Foxes can be heard at the Civic tomorrow night (Friday), whilst punk veterans Sham 69 are at the Slade Rooms. There's a sell-out again at the venue on Saturday for former leading members of The Beautiful South, Paul Heaton and Jacqui Abbott. Highlights at the Robin 2 in Bilston include '80s duo China Crisis on Sunday and former Zombies frontman Colin Blunstone on Monday.

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CHOICE



Guy Martin

Guy Martin vs the Robocar (Channel 4, 9pm)
According to predictions, in just over 10 years' time, half of all new cars sold will be electric and 15 per cent of them will be self-driving. But where does that leave Guy Martin? In this documentary, he tries to get to grips with autonomous vehicles by building his own robotic Ford Transit in his shed, where he discovers that the hardest part is replicating human thought. So, he travels to Budapest and the US to learn more about artificial intelligence and the morality tests the software engineers must grapple with, such as should a self-driving car save its passenger or a pedestrian in an emergency scenario. And in the ultimate test, Guy takes to the track to become the first person to pit his driving skills against an AI race car.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.30** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Fern Britton Meets Gregory Porter. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Elizabeth & Philip: Love and Duty. (R) **2.15** Mary Berry's Country House Secrets. (R) **3.15** Songs of Praise. **3.55** Alan Shearer: Dementia, Football and Me. (R) **4.55** Blue Planet II. (R) **5.55** BBC News.
6.10 **Regional Programme.**
6.20 **Countryfile.** The team visits the Cairngorms, where Joe Crowley explores Britain's largest nature reserve and one of its highest mountains, and Helen Skelton goes in search of golden eagles. Plus, Adam Henson prepares for next year's new arrivals on his farm and Tom Heap reports on the British chicken industry.
7.20 **Strictly Come Dancing: The Results.** Tess Daly and Claudia Winkelman reveal the results of last night's viewers' vote and another couple leaves the contest. Featuring a performance from Kelly Clarkson.
8.00 **Blue Planet II.** Footage of wildlife inhabiting underwater kelp forests, including thousands of giant cuttlefish spawning along a restricted area of rocky reef off the south coast of Australia. Males outnumber females 11 to one, which leads to fierce competition. Larger males use brute force to drive off competition, while their smaller rivals use deception by mimicking the appearance of females. The programme also features tiger sharks hunting for green turtles in fields of seagrass and spider crabs trying to avoid predators while they shed their shells.
9.00 **Howards End.** Margaret receives an offer which changes her plans significantly, while Evie's wedding brings the Schlegel, Bast and Wilcox families together – and drags secrets into the light.
10.00 BBC News.
10.20 **Regional Programme.**
10.30 **Match of the Day 2.** Mark Chapman reviews the day's Premier League action.
11.30 **Ronny Chieng: International Student.** Ronny agrees to fill in for Asher at her job.
11.55 **Weather for the Week Ahead.**
12.00 BBC News.

BBC2

6.05 Coast. (R) **6.50** A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **7.35** The Secret History of the British Garden. (R) **8.35** Countryfile. (R) **9.30** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.00** Food & Drink. (R) **11.30** My Life on a Plate. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** International Rugby Union. (R) **2.00** Ghost Bear Family: Natural World. (R) **3.00** Demolition: The Wrecking Crew. (R) **4.00** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.45** Flog It! (R) **5.45** Turkey with Simon Reeve. (R)
6.45 **Film: Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day.** (2014) Premiere. An 11-year-old boy has a day where everything seems to go wrong, but gets no sympathy from his family. He becomes convinced that bad things only ever happen to him, but then his parents, his brother and his sister all suffer terrible days of their own. Family comedy based on Judith Viorst's series of children's books, starring Ed Oxenbould, Steve Carell and Jennifer Garner.
8.00 **Robot Wars.** Robots Expulsion, Coyote, Thor, Magnetar, Hobbogoblin and Push to Exit battle it out for a place in the grand final. Among the players controlling the machines are self-taught engineer Ellis, and a team of schoolchildren determined to prove lack of experience is not a problem. Presented by Dara Ó Briain and Angela Scanlon.
9.00 **Expedition Volcano.** Part one of two. Documentary following scientists studying some of the world's most dangerous active volcanoes in the Congo. The series begins by exploring Nyiragongo, which has erupted twice in the last 50 years, most recently in 2002, when it devastated the nearby city of Goma. However, it lies in a region troubled by war and humanitarian crises, which has made study of the volcano difficult.
10.00 **Snowfall.** Lucia finds it hard to break away from her family. Teddy tries to cover Alejandro's tracks, and Franklin faces new threats. Guest starring Billy Boyd (The Lord of the Rings).
10.40 **Film: John Carter.** (2012) Fantasy adventure, with Taylor Kitsch and Lynn Collins.
12.40 Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) **1.45** Holby City. (R) **2.40** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.20** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Super 4. (R) **7.10** Mission Employable. (R) **7.05** Ode to a Thief. (R) **7.10** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Ben 10. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.00** Scrambled!: Wishfart. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Australian Wilderness with Ray Mears. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **11.00** Save Money: Good Food. (R) **11.30** Tipping Point. (R) **12.30** ITV News: Weather. **12.45** The X Factor: The Semi Finals. (R) **2.20** Midsomer Murders. (R) **4.10** Les Dawson Forever.
6.05 **Regional Programme:** Weather.
6.15 **ITV News:** Weather.
6.30 **The Chase: Celebrity Special.** Patrick Baladi, Vicky Williamson, John Graven and Kevin Eldon work as a team to secure a cash prize for charity. Presented by Bradley Walsh. Last in the series.
7.30 **The X Factor: The Semi Finals.** Dermot O'Leary hosts as the remaining contestants take to the stage, hoping to make it into the grand final, with judges Louis Walsh, Nicole Scherzinger, Simon Cowell and Sharon Osbourne battling it out to keep their acts in the show. This year Louis has the Boys, Nicole the Overs, Simon the Groups and Sharon the Girls.
9.00 **I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here!** Ant and Dec give viewers at home a chance to catch up with the superstar castaways as they prepare to enter their second week in the jungle. Plus, the competition steps up a gear as the celebrities face this year's live Bush Tucker Trial. In 2016, the contestants took part in the "Hungry Games" as part of the live trial, with Adam Thomas, Jordan Vorderman, Danny Baker, Jorlan Banjo, Ola Jordan and Wayne Bridge emerging victorious.
10.30 **ITV News:** Weather.
10.45 **Peston on Sunday.** Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston and Alegra Stratton. Last in the series. (R)
11.45 **Road Rage Britain: Caught on Camera.** (R)
12.45 Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

7.55 Frasier. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Sunday Brunch. **12.00** Formula 1 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix Live Build-Up. A look ahead to today's Grand Prix. **12.35** Formula 1 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix Live. The Abu Dhabi Grand Prix (Start-time 1.00pm). **3.10** Formula 1 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix Live Reaction. In-depth analysis of this afternoon's race. **4.35** Speed with Guy Martin: F1 Challenge. (R) **5.35** Channel 4 News.
6.05 **Film: Men in Black 3.** (2012) An alien criminal escapes from a prison on the moon and goes back in time on a mission of revenge, changing the course of history. Agent J of the top-secret Earth defence organisation follows him back to 1969, and joins forces with a younger version of his mentor Agent K to set things right. Sci-fi comedy sequel, starring Will Smith, Josh Brolin and Tommy Lee Jones. Edited for language and violence.
8.00 **Coastal Railways with Julie Walters.** New series. The actress travels around the UK coast by train, beginning by boarding the famous Jacobite steam train for a trip along Scotland's West Highland Railway, famously featured in the Harry Potter movies. Along the way, Julie learns about herring gutting and blowing up railway lines, and meets a traditional Scottish storyteller on the Isle of Skye.
9.00 **Guy Martin vs the Robocar.** The presenter explores the world of automated self-driving vehicles, attempting to build one of his own in his shed. He takes a trip to Budapest for a ride in a completely autonomous vehicle, which is being tested on public roads for the first time. Finally, he heads to Silverstone, to take on a computer-controlled car in a race.
10.00 **Film: RoboCop.** (2014) A critically injured police officer is rebuilt as a crime-fighting cyborg, but struggles to retain free will. Sci-fi thriller remake, with Joel Kinnaman and Gary Oldman.
12.10 **Film: Good Kill.** (2014) Drama, starring Ethan Hawke. **2.00** The Supertet. A cocker spaniel has a bulging disc in its spine. (R) **3.00** Trump: An American Dream. (R) **3.55** Location, Location, Location. (R) **4.50** Gillette World Sport. **5.15** KOTV Boxing Weekly. **5.45** Kirstie's Fill Your House for Free. (R) **5.55** Kevin Can Wait.

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Little Princess. **6.10** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **6.20** Poppy Cat. (R) **6.35** Wissper. (R) **6.40** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.45** Milkshake! Bopping About. (R) **6.50** Simon. (R) **6.55** Peppa Pig. (R) **7.00** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.15** Bob the Builder. (R) **7.25** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.35** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.50** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.15** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.35** Nella the Princess Knight. (R) **8.50** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.20** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.35** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.45** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.20** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.10** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **11.40** Film: A Christmas Tail. (2012) **1.20** Film: Winter Wedding. (2017) Premiere. Romantic drama, starring Andrea Bowen. **3.10** Film: A Christmas to Remember. (2016) **4.55** Film: Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest. (2006) Swashbuckling adventure sequel, starring Johnny Depp. **5.55** 5 News Update. **6.00** **Film: Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest.** (2006) Concluded.
7.55 5 News Weekend.
8.00 **Aviva Premiership Rugby Highlights.** Mark Durden-Smith and David Flatman present action from the ninth round of matches, including Newcastle Falcons v Gloucester at Kingston Park, Sale Sharks v Northampton Saints at the AJ Bell Stadium and Leicester Tigers v Worcester Warriors at Welford Road.
9.00 **Film: Fury.** (2014) An American tank crew undertakes a final dangerous mission behind enemy lines in the last months of the Second World War. Drama, starring Brad Pitt and Shia LaBeouf.
10.00 5 News Update.
10.05 **Film: Fury.** (2014) Concluded.
11.35 **Film: Flight of the Phoenix.** (2004) A plane crashes in the desert and the survivors plan to return to civilisation by building a new aircraft from the wreckage. Adventure, starring Dennis Quaid and Tyrese Gibson.
1.40 SuperCasino. **3.10** Chris Tarrant: Extreme Railway Journeys. (R) **4.00** My Mum's Hotter Than Me! (R) **4.50** Great Artists. (R) **5.20** Wildlife SOS. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Great Continental Railway Journeys
7.30 University Challenge **8.00** Nigel Kennedy at the BBC **9.00** Shark **10.00** Walrus: Two Tonne Tusker – Natural World **11.00** Naples '44: A Wartime Diary **12.20** Nigel Kennedy at the BBC **1.20** Shark **2.20** Walrus: Two Tonne Tusker – Natural World **3.20** Close
ITV2
12.30 Take Me Out **2.00** You've Been Framed and Famous! **3.05** I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! **4.05** Film: Despicable Me (2010) **5.05** FYI Daily **5.10** Film: Despicable Me (2010) **6.00** Film: Evan Almighty (2007) **7.00** FYI Daily **7.05** Film: Evan Almighty (2007) **8.05** Film: Wrath of the Titans (2017) **9.10** Film: Wrath of the Titans (2017) **10.00** Family Guy **10.30** I'm a Celebrity: Extra Camp **11.30** Family Guy **12.30** American Dad! **1.30** Release the Hounds **2.25** Teleshopping **5.55** ITV2 Nightscreen
ITV3
12.05 Wycliffe **1.15** Film: Columbo: How to Dial a Murder (1978) **2.50** Lewis **4.55** Agatha Christie's Marple **7.00** Housewife, 49 **9.00** Endeavour **11.05** The Blonde Bombshell **1.15** Heartbeat **2.05** The Knock **3.55** Wycliffe **4.50** Judge Judy **5.30** ITV3 Nightscreen
ITV4
11.40 The Darts Show **12.45** Live Darts: Players Championship Finals. Coverage of the quarter-finals from Butlins Minehead. **5.00** Pawn Stars **6.00** River Monsters **7.00** Live Darts: Players Championship Final. Coverage of the semi-finals and final at Butlins Minehead. **11.00** Film: Crank (2006) **12.00** FYI Daily **12.05** Film: Crank (2006) **12.45** The Sweeney **1.45** The Avengers **2.45** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping
E4
11.00 Made in Chelsea **12.00** Don't Tell the Bride **1.00** Film: Diary of a Wimpy Kid (2010) **2.55** Rude (ish) Tube Shorts **3.00** The Goldbergs **4.00** The Big Bang Theory **8.00** Film: Ghostbusters II (1989) **10.05** The Big Bang Theory: Who You Gonna Call? **11.05** Gogglebox **12.10** Rude Tube **1.15** First Dates **2.20** Gogglebox **3.15** Rude Tube **3.40** Hollyoaks
Film4
11.00 Thunderbirds (2004) **12.50** The Riot Club Interview Special **1.00** The Phantom (1996) **3.00** Fletch (1985) **5.05** The Muppet Christmas Carol (1992) **6.45** Miracle on 34th Street (1994) **9.00** Cowboys & Aliens (2011) **11.20** The Lincoln Lawyer (2011)

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

A Perfect Christmas, Channel 5, 3.45pm

An advertising executive walks past a display mannequin in a department store window every day. When she suffers a bad fall outside the shop, the dummy comes to life to help her. He turns out to be everything she has always wanted in a man – but she soon realises her dream does not bring her happiness. Festive fantasy, starring Claire Coffee and Ryan McPartlin. (2012)

TUESDAY

The Christmas Switch, Channel 5, 2pm

A hustler is asked to magically swap bodies with a dying man at Christmas in return for either a million dollars or having all his past sins forgiven. He chooses the money, but as he watches the other man using his body to do good deeds, he begins to reconsider what is important in his life. Fantasy, starring Brian Krause, Cedric Smith and Natasha Henstridge. (2014)



Total Recall, Friday, ITV, 11.15pm

WEDNESDAY

A Bride for Christmas, Channel 5, 11.45am

A woman swears off serious relationships after breaking off her third failed engagement, only to run into a man who seems perfect for her a month before Christmas. However, she does not realise he has made a bet with his friends that he can persuade a woman to marry him before the holiday begins. Romantic drama, with Arielle Kebbel. (2012)

THURSDAY

Seventh Son, Channel 5, 9pm

Premiere. A professional monster hunter hires a young apprentice to help him track down an evil queen. Fantasy adventure, starring Ben Barnes and Jeff Bridges. (2014)

FRIDAY

Total Recall, ITV, 11.15pm

A construction worker pays to have fake memories of a dream holiday implanted into his brain, but discovers his mind has already been tampered with – apparently to erase his true identity as a secret agent from a colony on Mars. Paul Verhoeven's sci-fi thriller, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, Rachel Ticotin and Michael Ironside. (1990)

Paul looks to serve up a tasty treat in new series

Say what you like about the latest Bake Off – and there are those of us who still feel nostalgic for the BBC days despite having great respect for Channel 4's handling of the series – but the latest run was an unmitigated success.

At 11 million viewers, the final was watched by the channel's biggest audience in 32 years (the 1985 drama A Woman of Substance pipped it to the post), and the second-biggest ever in Channel 4 history. It was still behind the Beeb's 2016 final, which drew in 14.8 million, but let's not split macarons here – after all, Prue Leith did give away the winner 12 hours before transmission.

Anyway, the anchor which enabled the new cast – judge Leith, and hosts Sandi Toksvig and Noel Fielding – to merge almost seamlessly into the old format was Paul Hollywood, the blue-eyed baking pro who's been with the show since series one. He's become notorious for his strict

judging style as well as the occasional praise he doles out to those (very few) deserving bakers – the "Hollywood Handshake" has become serious currency in Bake Off circles.

The fact is, Hollywood knows his stuff. He began working at a bakery – his father's – as a teenager, and went on to work as head baker at a number of prestigious hotels and restaurants throughout the UK and in Cyprus. This was all before he found fame. During this time, he's learned a thing or two about baking.

In this new series, he prepares to impart some of that knowledge – as well as, giving this series a rather unique twist, integrating some previously unseen footage from the Bake Off tent and even the auditions phase. This means it's a must for any fans of the series, who are hungry for more helpings before the next series comes along.

Noel and Sandi crop up, too, offering their inimitable insights,

while Prue is also on hand to keep Paul in line. Think of it as a reunion, then – especially when previous contestants Val and Selasi turn up to challenge Paul to bake a pistachio and rose petal roulade. Which he does, of course, with customary panache.

Other recipes – this is a baking show, after all – include Paul's favourite pizza recipe: a courgette, lemon and thyme-topped bake, an unusual combination for which he gives credit to Venice.

He also gets out and about, visiting the famous motor racing track Silverstone where he makes a childhood-favourite burger recipe for a barbecue held in the paddock, before heading back to the Bake Off tent with Prue, where he bakes a madeira celebration cake. He hands over the decoration of this particular confection to Noel and Sandi, who oblige with a "nude" meringue finish. Expect some risqué puns about that, then.



Paul Hollywood: A Baker's Life, Monday, Channel 4, 8pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

Supershoppers

Channel 4, 8.30pm

New series. The consumer advice show returns with Anna Richardson joined by new co-presenter Sabrina Grant to provide the lowdown on favourite brands and retailers, as well as tips on how to get the best deals. In the first edition Anna and Sabrina look at supermarkets' own ranges and investigate whether cheaper value-range products might be identical to pricier standard own-label lines. Plus, they offer advice on how to buy cheaper car insurance, and there is a face-off between cheap and expensive beauty wipes.

TUESDAY

MOTD Live

BBC2, 6.55pm

Following their World Cup Qualifier against Bosnia on Friday, England Women welcome Kazakhstan to Colchester United's Weston Homes Community Stadium. One player who can't wait for the Group One game is England's Essex-born defender Casey Stoney. 'I'm particularly looking forward to playing in Colchester', the Liverpool star says. 'I come from Basildon so it's great to have a game in my home county'. This is the first time the two nations have met, and Mo Marley's Lionesses will be expected to

put on a good showing tonight and secure a comfortable victory, similar to that of the 6-0 thrashing of Russia in September. Nikita Parris, Jodie Taylor, Jordan Nobbs, Lucy Bronze and Toni Duggan (two) were all on target that evening in Tranmere.

WEDNESDAY

The Channel: The World's Busiest Waterway

Channel 4, 9pm

More than 400 ships pass through the 21-mile-wide Dover Strait every day, making it, as the title of this new series suggests, the busiest waterway in the world. But the English Channel is also significant for the way it defines Britain's border with Europe – and in the wake of Brexit, these are uncertain times for the people who live and work on the waters. To offer a further insight into the life of the waterway, cameras go inside the Channel Tunnel, on board ferries and freighters and into the hidden nerve centres to see what it takes to keep the system moving. In the first episode, ferry captain Mark deals with high winds and drunk

passengers, while swimmer Naomi attempts to navigate her way through some challenging conditions.

THURSDAY

Great Canal Journeys

Channel 4, 8pm

They may be in their 80s, but there's no stopping Timothy West and Prunella Scales. They seem to have only just got back from their latest batch of jaunts, and here they are, off again on a two-part adventure which begins in north west Portugal. They're getting up close and personal with the dramatic local landscape while travelling down the Rio Douro via an old trade route.

En route the couple will stop off at the local vineyards, often perched on the nearby hillsides. It's a trip unlike any they've taken before, and includes the deepest lock in Europe and

various sites of ancient historical importance. But there's a little taste of home too in the form of a traditional English gentlemen's club in Porto before a chance to follow in the footsteps of a Yorkshire-born entrepreneur.

FRIDAY

Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast Channel 4, 8pm

Hosts Jamie Oliver and Jimmy Doherty are joined by Joanna Lumley in their cafe at the end of Southend Pier, and this time the menu is exclusively vegetarian, as the Ab Fab actress cooks the King of Malaysia's favourite dish, bringing back to life the tastes and smells of her childhood. Jamie prepares a spectacular M'hanncha – a spiral of filo pastry stuffed with pearl barley and butternut squash and the boys take to the road to champion British fava beans – which could help both the nation's farmers and its diet.

Eight Days That Made Rome: The Downfall of Nero Channel 5, 9pm

Bethany Hughes focuses on events leading up to and after 9th June 68AD, when Emperor Nero took his life, examining how it triggered the eventual decline of the Roman Empire.

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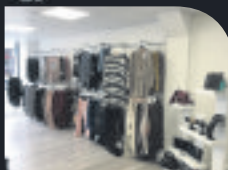
The approach to Christmas can sometimes be an especially difficult time when we have lost loved ones, however recently or long ago.

During the service, we will share words and music and provide an opportunity to light candles and quietly remember our loved ones who have passed away.

Following the service refreshments will be served in the church hall. We pray that you find this service of prayerful reflection and remembrance a help and a comfort.

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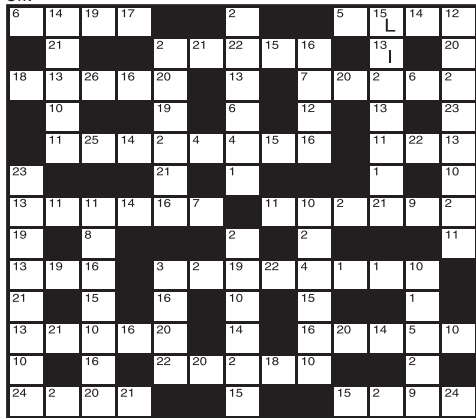
Express & Star

BRAIN GYM

No.457

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	E	H	S	O	D	I	Y	C	Z	F	P	T	B
14	A	R	J	K	M	G	U	W	X	Q	L	N	V

1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

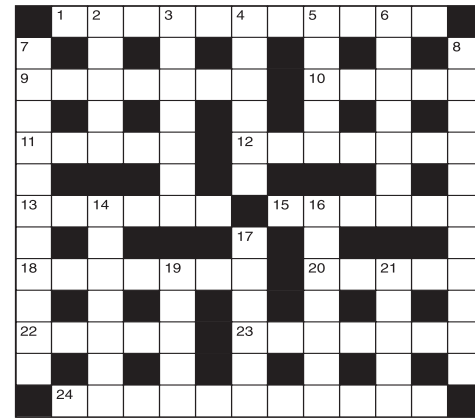
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- The old boy with the only perfume going out of date (11)
- Put on one's own for not being punctual? (7)
- Material from the French island (5)
- A language of South India (5)
- He has time to fill in his job (7)
- Threaten to finish one politician (6)
- Does he record runs in twenties? (6)
- Wishing success before tomorrow? (4,3)
- Song in really rich style (5)
- Stale in the smallest degree (5)
- Lie is wrong, certainly, but gives restful ease (7)
- Zodiacal sign not revealed to office workers (11)

Down

- Colour for brother to possess (5)
- Enthusiastic applause for egg production? (7)
- Corrects me on rising to conclusions (6)
- Officer doesn't need the Spanish punctuation mark (5)
- Retains more offensive order (7)
- The bird presumably had something to sing about in the morning (11)
- Insect on trial in international sport (4,7)
- Irreligious, but in favour of temple (7)
- He surfaces after work, of course (7)
- Organ permitted to find loophole (6)
- Put off animals from going inland eternally (5)
- Stir or get up to exercise (5)



Quick Clues:

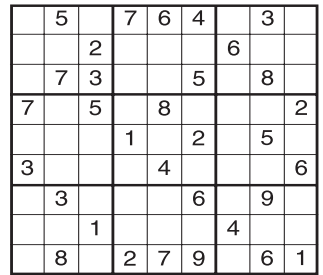
Across

- Besides (11)
- Horseman's iron (7)
- Granted (5)
- Anoint (5)
- Canadian province (7)
- Flippancy (6)
- Slumbering (6)
- Excess (7)
- Characteristic (5)
- Decree (5)
- Exhilaration (7)
- Enterprise (11)

Down

- Combine (5)
- Flood (7)
- Set at work (6)
- Strength (5)
- Daydream (7)
- Permanent (11)
- Very inefficient (11)
- Rendering (7)
- Relapse (3-4)
- Acquiesce (6)
- Supple (5)
- Foreign (5)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

7	3	5	4	9	1	8	6	2
6	4	9	8	2	7	5	3	1
1	8	2	5	6	3	4	7	9
3	5	6	9	8	2	7	1	4
9	2	7	6	1	4	3	5	8
4	1	8	3	7	5	2	9	6
5	7	1	2	4	9	6	8	3
8	9	4	7	3	6	1	2	5
2	6	3	1	5	8	9	4	7

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
 CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Arranger; 5 Cool; 9 Purr; 10 Strident; 11 Right; 12 Replace; 13 Temperateness; 18 Apparent; 19 Goal; 20 Protege; 21 David; 22 Rake; 23 Standing.
 Down: 2 Routine; 3 Airship; 4 Entertainment; 6 Operate; 7 Letters; 8 Simple; 13 Trapper; 14 Mapbook; 15 Earned; 16 Niggard; 17 Station.
 QUICK - Across: 1 Sanctify; 5 Acid; 9 Byre; 10 Accident; 11 Smart; 12 Talents; 13 Play upon words; 18 Interest; 19 Thin; 20 Bondage; 21 Solid; 22 Elan; 23 Astonish.
 Down: 2 Abysmal; 3 Clearly; 4 Facetiousness; 6 Cleaner; 7 Detests; 8 Pillow; 13 Pliable; 14 Antenna; 15 Uproar; 16 Outworn; 17 Deities.

Quiz

- Which disorder is also called word blindness?
- What is a dunlin?
- In which children's TV series would you find Alderney and Tobermory?
- Which singer was born Declan McManus?
- Which US President was assassinated in Buffalo?
- To which family does the lovebird belong?
- Which Vicar of Dibley star posed nude for Esquire magazine?
- Which art-form was regulated in the US by the Hays Office?
- Of what is Ceres the largest known example?
- According to Arthurian legend, who was Sir Galahad's father?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Benjamin Franklin; 2 Luxembourg; 3 J Edgar Hoover; 4 Polish; 5 Propaganda; 6 Aaron; 7 Muskrat; 8 One; 9 California; 10 George Eliot.

Niner: METAPHORS

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

34564
14925
57899428

gives a French author,
gives a French sculptor,
gives a French painter.

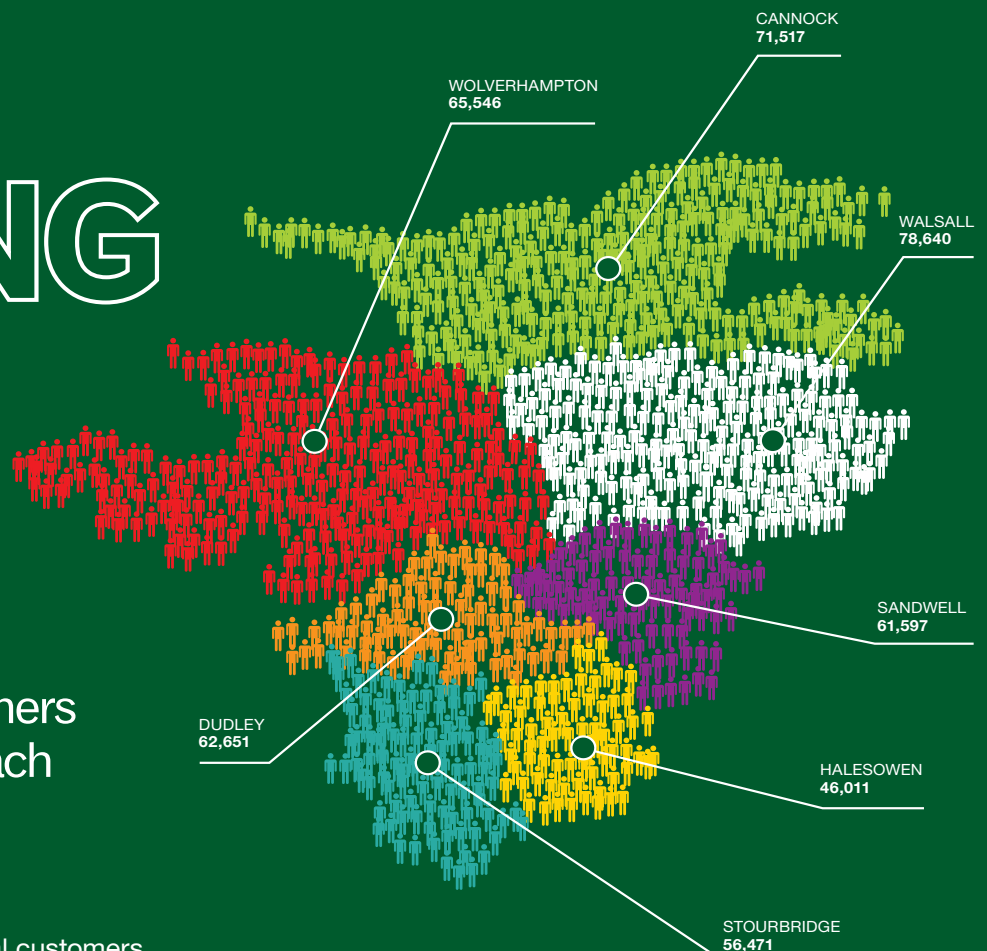
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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Friends reunited for special birthday

WE have been friends since middle school, sharing the joys and tribulations of teenage years and later weddings and children.

And now we were all sharing a special birthday! For a few years now we had abandoned present buying for birthdays and Christmas and just arranged a meal or break away. And this weekend it was a special one.

We were staying at the five-star St David's Hotel and Spa which has a prominent position on Cardiff Bay's waterfront and it's a stone's throw from the city centre. The hotel is striking with its glass fronted structure on the edge of the bay.

Across the Severn Estuary we could see where we planned to spend our evening at Michelin-starred Restaurant James Sommerin in Penarth.

The restaurant is in a prime position on the seafront with contemporary and chic decor, including the use of Welsh slate, and crisp white table covers.

PRIVATE

There is also a private dining room and Chef's table. There is a huge window from the main restaurant to the kitchen, where you watch the chefs at work.

In a short amount of time James has amassed an array of accolades and just two days after our visit the restaurant won four Rosettes at The AA Hospitality Awards 2017.

Proud of his Welsh heritage James, who runs the restaurant with his wife Louise, uses the finest ingredients, locally sourced where possible. The food was exquisite.

We went for the six-course testing menu including matching wine. The options for the evening were the six courses, nine courses and also the Surprise Menu when you leave your dining experience in James' hands. It is then a bespoke menu.

Striking and imposing – Cardiff Bay's waterfront



Each course was expertly presented and a lovely touch was that the chefs including the man himself came to our table to run through the dishes.

The six courses started with beetroot, feta and pine-nut; followed by venison with carrot, tarragon and mushroom and then langoustine with samphire and spices; guinea fowl with sweetcorn, truffle and potato. For dessert there was pear with cinnamon, flap-jack and hazelnut and apple with puff pastry, caramel and vanilla.

After the meal, it was back to our hotel which is set on Cardiff Bay's waterfront.

Restaurant has panoramic views across the bay



Our rooms with balconies had views across the estuary and it was wonderful to watch the boats and yachts sailing by.

Relaxation was certainly the name of the weekend with Marina Spa being most inviting with relaxation pools, hydrotherapy multi jet marine pools, a sauna, gym, treatment rooms and a relaxation suite, whilst enjoying the beautiful views overlooking Cardiff Bay.

The hotel restaurant is beautiful and airy with lovely neutral and teal shades and floor-to-floor windows with panoramic views across the bay.

The Admiral St David draws inspiration from the eclectic food culture and bold flavours of Australasia and Asia-Pacific, while looking closer to home for the best of seasonal Welsh produce.

After breakfast at the Admiral we wandered around Cardiff Bay which used to be known as Tiger Bay. It has been transformed with the Giant Wheel, restaurants and bars and the Senedd – home to the Welsh Government. Next door is the Wales Millennium Centre. There is also the Norwegian Church which Roald Dahl had attended as a child and is now Cafe Norsk.

LISA BAILEY

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Nasaby Drive, Halesowen, West Midlands B63C1, 200 pcm+ Fees
●● 1ST MONTHS RENT HALF PRICE! DONT MISS OUT ON THIS OFFER ●● A superb modern detached family home in a quiet cul-de-sac on the Squarrels estate. Reception hallway, guest cloakroom, spacious lounge leading to dining room, fitted kitchen, 3 good size bedrooms & family shower room, gas central heating, double glazed, large driveway, carport & garage. New carpets to be fitted downstairs & redecorated. EPC: D



Causey Farm Road, Halesowen, West Midlands, B63E850 pcm+ Fees
This semi-detached property is situated in a quiet cul-de-sac in this very desirable location & consists of 2 reception rooms ● sun room leading to a beautiful mature south facing private garden, kitchen, downstairs w.c extended garage, upstairs is a shower room & 3 good size bedrooms, garage & driveway for 2 cars. EPC: TBC



Summerfields Avenue, Hurst Green, Halesowen, West Midlands, B62E770
●● 1ST MONTHS RENT HALF PRICE! DONT MISS OUT ON THIS OFFER ●● Ideally located in Hurst Green, close to popular school, motorway access and commutable to Birmingham, is this lovely semi-detached home, briefly comprising of: 2 large bedrooms and 1 single box room, large rear reception room, front reception room, modern fitted kitchen with white goods, family bathroom with shower, front and rear gardens, driveway parking and garage, unfurnished. EPC: E



Wychbury Road, Brierley Hill, DY5E875 pcm+ Fees
●● 1ST MONTHS RENT HALF PRICE! DONT MISS OUT ON THIS OFFER ●● This lovely semi detached house is ideally located for Merry Hill, Thorns College and local primary schools. Featuring an extended lounge & kitchen, dining area, 3 good bedrooms, house bathroom with shower, tandem garage, front and rear gardens, central heating and double glazing. EPC: D



Dudley Road, Halesowen, B63E650 pcm+ Fees
●● 1ST MONTHS RENT HALF PRICE! DONT MISS OUT ON THIS OFFER ●● A 2 bedroom detached bungalow in this very convenient location. Newly decorated with a brand new kitchen & bathroom this property offers a large lounge, fitted kitchen with oven/hob, bathroom with shower, 2 good size bedrooms, gas central heating, front & rear garden, garage & driveway. EPC: E



NEW
Horden Crescent, Brierley Hill, DY5E625 pcm+ Fees
in this popular location comprising of: entrance porch, lounge with stairs off, fitted kitchen/dining area, 3 good size bedrooms, modern bathroom with shower, newly fitted gas central heating, front & rear gardens & driveway parking for 2 cars. EPC: F



Brett Young Close, Halesowen, B63E625 pcm+ Fees
An impressive 2nd floor apartment within walking distance to Halesowen Town Centre. This modern apartment features 2 double bedrooms, master bedroom with en-suite shower room, spacious open plan lounge/kitchen, bathroom with shower, allocating parking. Also benefits from gas central heating and double glazing. MINIMUM CONTRACT 12 MONTHS. EPC: B



NEW
Lyttleton House, Blackberry Lane, Halesowen, B63E595 pcm+ Fees
An attractively positioned, 1 bedroom, purpose built over 60s retirement apartment in Halesowen Town Centre. Featuring large communal lounge, gardens and launderette facilities and lift access. This ground floor apartment is accessed via the secure communal hallway with intercom access. The apartment features a kitchen with fridge freezer, double bedroom with built in wardrobe, shower room with shower, electric storage heating and double glazing, and parking. EPC: C



NEW
Client House, kenswick Drive, Halesowen, B63E575 pcm+ Fees
An unfurnished modern 1st apartment, close to Halesowen Town Centre, briefly comprising of: 2 bedrooms, modern fitted kitchen, spacious lounge, gas central heating, double glazing, modern bathroom with shower, garage. A must see property! EPC: C



George Road, Halesowen, B63E595 pcm+ Fees
Located in a sought after area of Halesowen. This lovely 2 bed terraced property with off road parking features a large lounge, fitted kitchen, 2 bedrooms, white bathroom suite and shower, off road parking and a good size rear garden. EPC: D



NEW
Willetts Drive, Halesowen/Colley Gate, B63E575 pcm+ Fees
An unfurnished semi detached house ideally located for local shops, buses and Colley Lane Primary School. This property features 2 double bedrooms, modern kitchen, house bathroom with shower, modern lounge, front and rear gardens, double glazing, gas central heating, parking for 1 car. EPC: C



Briery Close, Cradley Heath, B64E595 pcm+ Fees
Recently refurbished is this 3 bedroom semi detached family home in this popular residential area. Briefly comprising of 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen, 3 good size bedrooms, front & rear garden. On road parking. Ideal for Timbertree Primary School. EPC: D



Purlin Wharf, Netherton, DY2E550 pcm+ Fees
A very presentable unfurnished top floor apartment on this popular development overlooking the canal featuring 2 double bedrooms, spacious lounge, fitted kitchen with oven/hob and washer/dryer, master bedroom with en-suite, family bathroom with shower, double glazing, electric storage heating, one allocated parking space. Viewing highly recommended. EPC: TBC



Apperley Way, Halesowen, B63E475 pcm+ Fees
Beautifully presented and not to be missed. This lovely ground floor apartment, situated on a popular estate which is ideal for Cradley Heath Train Station, Cradley Town Centre and not far from Merry Hill. Featuring, 2 good size bedrooms (1 with free standing wardrobes and chest of drawers), spacious lounge, modern shower room, stunning kitchen with washing machine, dishwasher and integrated fridge freezer, communal parking. EPC: F



NEW
Causeway Green Road, Oldbury, B68E425 pcm+ Fees
This large, split level flat above shops, within walking distance to bus links and close to J2 of the M5, briefly comprising of: gas central heating, spacious living room, fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower, parking to rear, unfurnished. EPC: E



NEW
Belgrave Road, Halesowen, B62E425 pcm+ Fees
A large ground floor modern apartment within easy reach of local shops, bus links and Rowley Regis train station. Featuring a large lounge, fitted kitchen with oven/hob, 1 double bedroom, newly fitted bathroom suite with shower. Gas central heating, small rear garden with private entrance. EPC: TBC



Somers Road, Halesowen, B62E395 pcm+ Fees
●● 1ST MONTHS RENT HALF PRICE! DONT MISS OUT ON THIS OFFER ●● A 1 bedroom 1st floor apartment close to Halesowen Town Centre, offering generous accommodation which includes new carpets, featuring lounge with open plan kitchen, bedroom with en-suite shower room, double glazing, communal garden, on road parking, unfurnished. EPC: G



Eagle House, Lye, DY9 £285 pcm+ Fees
●● 1ST MONTHS RENT HALF PRICE! DONT MISS OUT ON THIS OFFER ●● This 3 storey 1880's victorian town house, ideally located for bus routes to Halesowen, Stourbridge and Merry Hill. Comprising of: Two reception rooms, large fitted kitchen, 3 double bedrooms, master bedroom with en suite, 1 bathroom with fitted shower, rear garden, gas central heating, double glazing, parking on road or car park opposite. EPC: F



LET
Grange Road, Halesowen, B63E895 pcm+ Fees
A deceptively spacious detached family with many character features, entrance hallway with parquet flooring, large lounge with multi fuel burner, separate dining room, fitted kitchen, utility, 3 double bedrooms, large refitted bathroom, private lounge rear garden, large detached garage with electric roller door, gas central heating, double glazed. EPC: E



LET
Racemeadow Crescent, Netherton, DY2E825 pcm+ Fees
●● 1ST MONTHS RENT HALF PRICE! DONT MISS OUT ON THIS OFFER ●● A lovely modern 3 bedroom detached house in a popular. With entrance hall, large lounge, separate dining room, kitchen with appliances, downstairs w.c., south facing rear garden, 3 good sized bedrooms, master en-suite & fitted wardrobes, family bathroom, gas central heating & double glazed. A large corner plot with garage & driveway parking. EPC: TBC



LET
Toys Lane, Colley Gate, Halesowen, B63E695 pcm+ Fees
●● 1ST MONTHS RENT HALF PRICE! DONT MISS OUT ON THIS OFFER ●● This 3 storey 1880's victorian town house, ideally located for bus routes to Halesowen, Stourbridge and Merry Hill. Comprising of: Two reception rooms, large fitted kitchen, 3 double bedrooms, master bedroom with en suite, 1 bathroom with fitted shower, rear garden, gas central heating, double glazing, parking on road or car park opposite. EPC: F

PROPERTY



Stunning modern property is packed with appeal

This stunning modern four-bedroomed detached family home in Kirkpatrick Drive, Wordsley, lies in a quiet cul-de-sac.

It is for sale through Hunters at £280,000.

Its accommodation briefly comprises an entrance hall, cloakroom/WC, lounge, dining room, modern fitted breakfast kitchen, master bedroom with en-suite, three further bedrooms and a bathroom.

**WORDSLEY
£280,000**

Outside there is a low-maintenance private rear garden, driveway and garage to the rear. To the front of the property there is a lawn with a decorative shrub border, a path leading to the front door and a gate providing access to the rear garden.

The attractive entrance hall has

stairs to the first floor and a storage cupboard and the cloakroom/WC off. The lounge has a bay window to the front, an electric fire and double doors to the dining room, which in turn has doors to the garden.

The kitchen/breakfast room has a gas hob with stainless steel cooker hood over, space for a fridge/freezer, plumbing for a washing machine and dishwasher, recess spotlights and a window to the rear.

Contact Hunters on 01384 443331 or visit www.hunters.com



Charming four-bed detached family home for sale

Early viewings are being highly recommended for this charming four-bedroomed detached house in Sandpiper Way, Erdington.

It is for sale through Liberty Estates at £245,000. A modern home, its accommodation briefly comprises two reception rooms, a fitted kitchen, a cloakroom/WC, four bedrooms (master en-suite), a family bathroom, a garage and a driveway.

**ERDINGTON
£245,000**

The property is double glazed and warmed by centrally heating.

It is set back from the roadside with a paved driveway for several cars.

The entrance hall has laminate

flooring and stairs off. Both reception rooms have laminate flooring, with reception room two having French doors to the garden.

The kitchen includes an integrated double oven, gas hob, cooker hood, plumbing for automatic washing machine and a dishwasher.

To book a viewing, contact Liberty Estates on 0121 565 1010.

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Selling my complete collection in separate lots.
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FOR ALL RAILWAY COLLECTIONS
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Best prices paid.
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ALSO

GARAGE CLEARANCES

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Petrol Cans,
Old Jugs,
Bikes and Motorbikes.

Anything old.

**** TOP PRICES PAID ****
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Wanted by private collector.
Telephone 01902 676540.

READERS ARE ADVISED to carefully consider all of their options before agreeing to the sale of any of their items.

SPECTRUM GAMES wanted plus any Spectrum 128/2 computer wanted any old Crash Magazines wanted. 01902 892918.

WANTED
VINTAGE TAMIYA REMOTE CONTROL MODELS

Also any old radio controlled models in any condition.
Mardave, Kyocho, Traxxas, HP; Team Associated, Schumacher

Big or small collections bought.

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AERIAL AND TV SPECIALIST
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specialists at
your service

Aerials

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SINGLE ITEMS TO FULL LOADS.
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5 Business & Farming

Business Opportunities

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6 Property

Accommodation To Let

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments/contracts.

NOTICE TO READERS
It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

SINGLE FLAT suit mature Gent, refurbished throughout, all up to spec. Gornal area. £90 p/w. Call 0771 5603357.

SMART SINGLE ROOMS in Shared house, Netherton. £85 p.w. inc. bills. No DSS. 2 weeks deposit. 07940 116130.

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We Buy Houses For Cash

Free Valuation? Yes! No Fees? Yes! Any Location? Yes!
Fast Sale? Yes! Any House? Yes! Any Condition? Yes!

Get your FREE, instant cash offer today!

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Call Paula 01384 467643

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www.webuyhouseswestmidlands.co.uk

7 Jobs

Employment Wanted

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Full Time General

Do you fancy a career change, have you ever thought of a career in care?

If so we may be able to help.

We provide residential care, supported living and domiciliary care for people who present with challenging behaviour patterns.

Our services based in the West Midlands area have the following vacancies at our residential and supported living homes based in the Wolverhampton, Stourbridge, Halesowen, Dudley and Coventry areas.

SENIOR SUPPORT:
Applicants should have 2 years minimum experience & NVQ level 3 or be working towards this qualification. **Salary £9.00 per hour.**

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We currently have vacancies for daytime support workers, no experience is necessary as training will be provided. **Salary £8.00 per hour.**

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Full Time General

CONTRACTS/PROJECT ENGINEER

Industry: Dust/Fume Control Industry.

A Contracts/Project Engineer is required in the Halesowen area to help a small office with the design of dust and fume control equipment including the preparation of CAD drawings for manufacture, all necessary site surveys and customer liaisons UK wide. AutoCAD experience is essential. Candidates must have good communication skills, be flexible and have a positive attitude. Candidates must also hold a full UK Driving Licence as a company car will be provided. The hours required are generally 37.5 hours per week, however there will be out of hours working.

Please apply in writing or by email with a full CV, to: Andy Sewell
GWYN THOMAS LIMITED, 217, Long Lane, Halesowen B62 9JT
Email: andysewell@gwynthomas.com
STRICTLY NO AGENCIES
Closing date: 15th December 2017

The Earls High School
Furnace Lane, Halesowen,
West Midlands, B63 3SL
Tel: 01384 816105
Email: recruitment@earls.dudley.sch.uk

DATA MANAGER/EXAMS OFFICER
Grade 8, Scale Points 30 - 33
£24,066 - £26,310 p.a.

Term time only, 39 weeks, plus 5 days

Please contact the School for further details and an Application Form or visit our website: www.earlshighschool.org
CLOSING DATE: Tuesday, 28th November 2017

The Earls High School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is subject to an enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service check.

8 Motoring

Cars Under £1500



CITROEN XSARA PICASSO

2007, 71,000 miles, new MoT, lovely condition, s/h.

£1,200 ono.

07572 554829.

BARGAIN

FORD FOCUS
1.8 DIESEL

Silver, 2005, 115k miles, 12 months MoT, service history, recently serviced, good clean condition inside and out.

£950 ono.

07979 472572.

Cars Under £1500



FORD MONDEO

2005, 107,000 miles, silver, alarm, long MoT, central locking.

£380 ono.

07804 629130.

EXCELLENT CONDITION

PEUGEOT 207
3dr Sport 1.6

2007, metallic grey, 2 former keepers, 73,000 miles, air con, CL, alloy wheels, PAS.

MoT until April 18,

Any trial.

£1,375.

07923 132859.

BARGAIN

PEUGEOT 406
DIESEL ESTATE 7 SEATER

2003 reg.
5 months MoT.
Very good condition inside and out.

£500.

07837 505156.

GOOD RUNNER

PEUGEOT 407 ESTATE

2006 Diesel, MoT till May 23, 2018, excellent condition, excellent runner, electric sunroof and wing mirrors, well maintained, low road tax on this model, genuine reason for sale.

£1,300 ono.

07539 768236.



PROTON SATRIA NEO

2011, GSX model, 40,000 miles, one lady owner, service history, receipts, old MoT's, Alpine CD player, air con, parking sensors, pas, e/w, c/l, alloys, rear spoiler.

£875 ono.

07946 835467.

BARGAIN

RENAULT CLIO

July 2002,

1200cc

MoT October 2018.

Recent full service with new parts.

£495 ovno.

01902 829438.

BARGAIN

ROVER 75

2002 reg, V6, 2.5, automatic, antique gold, 12 months MoT, just had full service

£750 ono.

07732 820368.

MUST BE SEEN

VAUXHALL MERIVA

04 plate, low miles, 52,000, excellent throughout, full MoT, service history.

£850 ono.

07972 169554.



VAXUHALL CORSA 1200

2005, 40,000 Miles, silver, abs, electric windows, air bag, alarm, 12 months MoT, CD, petrol, good condition, area Blackheath

£590

07733 536832.

Cars Over £1500

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2013 reg., Alpine white, black leather interior, FBWWSH, 5yr service pack ends 2018, 41,750 miles, heated seats, DAB, Professional radio, Bluetooth, excellent condition, £12,500. Private Seller. Call 07817 019703.

PRESTIGE

BMW X3 3.0 SD

M Sport auto, 2008, silver with black leather, usual refinements, loads of history, totally pristine condition, 195k but looks and drives like 50k.

£5,995

07411 414284.



CITROEN XSARA PICASSO VTX

2008, 43,000 miles, electric windows, electric mirrors, air con, MoT, central locking, pas, CD, 1.6 16v petrol, very good condition.

£1,699.

07879 403302.



FORD FIESTA ZETEC

2007, 57, 1.6TDCi, 64,000 miles, full service history, electric windows, electric mirrors, alarm, long MoT. Superb condition.

£1,995.

01902 744023.



HONDA CIVIC

VTEC SE, 2007, 1.8 Petrol 88k miles, one owner, full service history, alloys, a/c, radio cd, great condition

£2,795 ono

01902 850622.

EXCELLENT CONDITION

MERCEDES C180

KOMPRESSOR

ADVANTAGE SE

2006, 1.8 petrol, MoT till March, 33,000 miles, good condition.

£3,950.

07976 284351.



PEUGEOT 206CC ALLURE

2005, 55 plate, 46,000 miles, blue, abs, electric windows, electric mirrors, air con, full service history, alarm, MoT. Superb condition.

£1,695.

01902 744023.

BARGAIN

PEUGEOT 207
1.6 HDI SPORT

2010, 5dr,
71k miles, excellent condition, very economical,

£30 road tax.

£2,350.

07976 359922.



RENAULT CLIO DYNAMIQUE

2012, 38,000 miles, abs, electric windows, air bag, electric mirrors, air con, fsh, long MoT, cruise control, Navigation System, half leather.

£2,699 ono.

07879 403302.



RENAULT TWINGO PZAZ

2011, 17,400 miles, abs, electric windows, electric mirrors, fsh, MoT, central locking, pas, CD, very good condition.

£2,299.

07879 403302.



VOLKSWAGEN FOX 1.2

Three door.
Hatchback.
2010 (60 reg).
Red. Petrol.
Manual. MoT November 2018.
Insurance Group 1.
66,000 miles.
Two keys.
Excellent condition.

£2,095 ono.

07871 521216.

Classic Cars



MG B GT

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Fully serviced and MoT.
Offers over £3,250.
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alan reed cars

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spares & accessories

Accessories & Services

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FOUR WINTER tyres, Goodyear Ultra, 245 x 40 x 18v, minimum tread 6.5mm, S type Jag. £150. 01902 674453.

9 Local Information

Public Notices

LICENSING ACT 2003
08 NOV 2017
NOTICE IS GIVEN THAT: SUBEETHA SATHYANATHAN HAS APPLIED TO Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council FOR Variation of Current Premises Licence VARIATION OF HOURS FOR RETAIL SALE OF ALCOHOL OFF THE PREMISES FOR THE PREMISES SELECT AND SAVE CONVENIENCE STORE, 64a-66 LONG LANE, HALESOWEN, B62 9LB THE FOLLOWING OPENING HOURS ARE APPLIED FOR: MONDAY TO SUNDAY BETWEEN THE HOURS 00.00 TO 00.00 HOURS Anyone wishing to oppose the application must give notice in writing to the Licensing Team, Dudley MBC, Unit 1 Hurst Business Park, Narrow Boat Way, Brierley Hill DY5 1UF (licensing@dudley.gov.uk) by 7TH DEC 2017 and give the reasons for their opposition. Copies of those objections will be sent to the applicant for their consideration and comment. Persons objecting to the grant of licences may be invited to attend a public hearing. It is an offence to knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application and the maximum fine for which a person is liable on summary conviction for making a false statement is a level 5 fine on the standard scale.

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES

For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to
Marie Hogg on 01902 713146 or email marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk

(remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

10 Personals

Personal

SINCERE CARING GAY LADY
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Sports Clubs

TIVIDALE FOOTBALL ACADEMY U11's PLAYERS NEEDED
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BUY LOCAL SELL LOCAL

01902 317878

Classified Ads

Probably best car Vauxhall makes

By Ian Donaldson

Vauxhall can't have heard about the demise of diesel; the new range topping Insignia Country Tourer comes with nothing else.

In fact, there isn't even a choice of engine until a second one arrives in a few weeks. And that's a diesel too.

Of course, Vauxhall knows diesels are going to be around for years and the overhyped stories that diesel is in its death throws are simply nonsense.

Which is just as well if you enjoy your driving, for the newcomer is probably the best car Vauxhall currently makes.

Ability

For a £1,355 premium over the normal Sport Tourer you gain four-wheel drive in the most expensive version, while all of them have a gently raised ride height (+20mm) and the macho black plastic cladding and silver skid plates that these days signifies a car with the ability to handle a slippery forest track.

The result is a big car, more than five metres long, that socks it to the likes of Audi's Allroad and the VW Passat Alltrack but for thousands less, starting the three car range at £25,635.

All of them share a 168bhp 2.0 litre turbo diesel engine and the ability to touch 135mph and hit 62mph in around nine seconds while managing better than 43mpg in the official test. A 210 horsepower diesel arrives shortly and automatic gears are already an option in a Country Tourer in front-drive form. Order the 4x4 (£27,235) and you'll have a car that is mostly front wheel drive most of the time but can switch power to the back wheels in an instant when slip is detected.

Beneath the new body cladding sits a car



Standard kit includes a fine satellite navigation system



This car has plenty of space for passengers in the rear

with enough space in the rear seat to act a stand-in limo and a boot that varies from generous (560 litres) with the seat back upright to vast (1,665 litres) with it folded down.

Lack of room will never be a problem here. Nor will the fittings and fixtures that come with a car Vauxhall perches at the pinnacle of the Insignia range.

As befits the poshest model there are a

host of standard features, from a tailgate that opens with a well aimed kicking motion under the rear bumper to roof rails that can cope with loads up to 100kg.

You and your passengers should never feel a wintry chill in this car, with heated front seats as standard and outer rear seats as an option along with the option of a heated steering wheel for the driver and a heated windscreen to quickly banish early morning frost.



This version of the Insignia goes well beyond its specification and turns into an enjoyable ride

Standard kit also includes a fine satellite navigation, cruise control, leather faced seats, 19ins alloy wheels, panoramic camera and Vauxhall's OnStar system that gives you a wi-fi hotspot in the car and automatic crash response if the worst happens.

But this version of the Insignia goes well beyond its specification and turns into an enjoyable drive as soon as you head off down the road, a potent and easy-going

diesel engine mating with a precise manual gearchange to provide a car with genuine punch.

On a properly surfaced road, even in pouring rain, you're unlikely ever to trigger the 4x4 system into instant action. But come a winter chill or a muddy lane in deepest February and you might be very glad that your Country Tourer will take care of things for you.

www.twall.co.uk

TWall Garages

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TWall Garages

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www.twall.co.uk



There's a hint of ruggedness if you add on traction and hill descent control

Latest contender for small SUV stardom from Citroën

By Ian Donaldson

Another day, another compact SUV appears on the scene. Suddenly, the world is full of little cars that look as though they could climb a (small) mountain or ford a (shallow) river.

Latest contender for small SUV stardom is the Citroën C3 Aircross, a replacement for the C3 Picasso now that small MPV people carriers are out of favour with buyers, who apparently regard them as too practical looking. So they're turning in their millions to the SUV, where building them taller and adding obvious body protection armour releases the inner Outback hero in us all.

The car joins the Citroën range alongside the cheaper C3 hatchback which has become the biggest seller in the UK range since entering showrooms in January. C3 Aircross prices start at £13,995 and top out at £19,720 for a car that its maker hopes will sell strongly on style and comfort, both attributes of Citroëns from before your grandfather was a boy.

A bit more ground clearance over the non-Aircross version of C3 and the availability of traction control and hill descent control as a £400 extra on some versions give the right models a hint of off-road ruggedness.

But the success of the this Spanish-built C3 Aircross will depend much more on how well potential buyers are tempted by the way they can personalise their cars inside and out.



There's plenty of legroom in the back

They might fancy the Hype Mistral design theme (£750) with its premium feel leather and satin chrome surrounds for the air vents. Or the tan coloured finish of the half-leather seats in the Hype Colorado design (also £750) could win the style battle.

Outside, there are similar choices to be made, from roof and door mirrors in different colours to the rest of the car or perhaps a breathing blue or spicy orange paint job for £520.

Not that Citroën has forgotten the practicalities, reckoning the newcomer has the most rear leg room in its class and the biggest boot too. Add a family pack (from £350) and the rear bench slides to prioritise leg or luggage room and the front passenger seat folds flat for that Ikea purchase moment.

Citroën must be confident buyers will be happy to spend more on spec'ing their C3 Aircrosses; the less obviously stylish C3 hatch has already seen most purchasers splashing out on two-tone paint and picking the dearer versions as a base. Which means the entry level C3 Aircross with 82 horsepower and 116g/km of CO2 will attract few buyers in Touch trim, with Feel and Flair offerings taking the majority of sales.

There are four petrol engines to choose from, all 1.2 litres but with power outputs of 82, 110, 120 and 130 horsepower. Official fuel consumption ranges from 55.4mpg to 56.5mpg and CO2 of 115/116g/km. Two diesels complete the engine choices, both 1560cc and with 99 or 120bhp and up to 70.6mpg and 104g/km.

Every C3 Aircross comes with cruise control, air conditioning and DAB radio but you need to move up a grade to the Feel for alloy wheels, space saver wheel, halogen headlights, rear electric windows and a seven inch touchscreen.

Take the top Flair grade and the goodies count mounts, with auto air con, sat nav and keyless entry and starting as highlights. Android Auto and Apple CarPlay feature in Feel and Flair models, along with Bluetooth.

Out on the road in a 110 horsepower petrol version the C3 Aircross felt immediately comfortable, thanks both to a seat with generous proportions and a ride the right side of firm. Our test run showed 38.1mpg on the trip computer, not an outstanding figure from a car that needed working quite hard through the gears to extract performance. A 110 diesel did much better, with a lively feel and 55.3mpg showing over the same route as the petrol version.

Both felt nicely special inside and both had a touchscreen that needed prodding to change cabin temperature when an old fashioned twist knob would do the job with less fiddling around.

Oak Garage

.co.uk

Oak Garage your local RAC Approved Dealer.

**Low Mileage**

64	Hyundai IX20 1.6 Active Auto Grey Only 4000 Miles	£8,995
14	Vauxhall Mokka Hatchback 1.6i SE Silver Only 6000 Miles	£10,495
64	Nissan Micra Hatchback 1.2 Acenta CVT Blue Only 9000 Miles	£8,295
63	Vauxhall Zafira 1.7 CDTi Design Nav [110] Grey Only 10000 Miles	£8,995
62	Skoda Fabia 1.2 TSI Elegance Maroon 11000 Miles	£6,995
64	Citroen C3 Picasso 1.4 VTI 16V VTR+ Red Only 11000 Miles	£7,495
Citroen		
09	Citroen C3 Picasso Diesel 1.6 HDi 16V VTR+ Silver 43k	£4,295
14	Citroen C4 Picasso 1.6 e-HDi 115 Air Exclusive Silver 23k	£9,695
64	Citroen C4 Picasso Diesel 1.6 HDi VTR+ Blue 17k	£9,295
06	Citroen C6 2.7 HDi V6 Exclusive 4dr Auto White 79k	£9,995
58	Citroen C6 2.7 HDi V6 Lignage 4dr Auto White 64k	£8,995
59	Citroen C6 Diesel Saloon 2.7 HDi V6 Exclusive 4dr Auto Silver	£5,495
64	Citroen Grand C4 Picasso 1.6 e-HDi 115 Air Excl Black 22k	£12,495
14	Citroen Grand C4 Picasso 1.6 e-HDi 115 Air Exclusive+ Red 33k	£11,695
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Ford		
14	Ford C-max Diesel 1.6 TDCi Titanium Brown 49k	£8,495
64	Ford C-max Diesel Estate 1.6 TDCi Zetec Silver 25k	£8,995
62	Ford Fiesta Hatchback 1.25 Zetec 3dr [82] White 50k	£5,495
14	Ford Focus 1.6 125 Titanium Navigator Powershift Blue 25k	£9,495
14	Ford Focus 1.6 TDCi Zetec Navigator ECONetic Black 98k	£6,295
11	Ford Focus Diesel 1.6 TDCi 115 Titanium Blue 62k	£6,495
59	Ford Focus Diesel 1.6 TDCi Zetec [110] [DPF] Silver 71k	£3,995
60	Ford Focus Hatchback 1.6 Zetec Silver 60k	£4,495
64	Ford Grand C-max Diesel 1.6 TDCi Zetec Blue 41k	£9,995
64	Ford S-max 1.6 TDCi Zetec [Start Stop] Silver 37k	£11,295
64	Ford S-max Diesel Estate 2.0 TDCi 163 Titanium Blue 33k	£11,495

Nissan

64	Nissan Juke Diesel Hatchback 1.5 dCi Acenta Silver 14k	£9,495
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64	Nissan Note Diesel Hatchback 1.5 dCi Tekna Blue 38k	£7,995
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60	Nissan Note Hatchback Special Editions 1.4 N-Tec Silver 36k	£4,995
64	Nissan Qashqai 1.2 DiG-T Acenta [Smart Vision Pack] Silver 24k	£11,695
14	Nissan Qashqai 1.2 DiG-T Acenta [Smart Vision] Beige 29k	£10,995
63	Nissan QASHQAI+2 Hatchback 1.6 [117] Acenta Black 24k	£11,695

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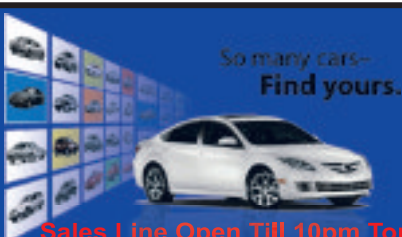


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Chris as Walsall manager in 1995, after the signing of Derek Mountfield



Nicholl heads the ball towards goal during one of his 210 appearances for Aston Villa



A picture captures the impact as Jeff Astle heads the ball



Playing for Villa in the 1970s seen with the League Cup trophy



Chris in his later years, still a favourite with the crowds at the Saddlers

Ex-Walsall boss Chris tells of memory fears

FORMER Walsall manager and Villa captain Chris Nicholl has said he no longer remembers where he lives – due to brain damage caused by years of heading footballs.

The 71-year-old, who still lives in the West Midlands, has said his condition is continuing to get worse. The Northern Ireland international won two League Cups with Villa in the 1970s, famously netting a long-range stunner in the 1977 final against Everton.

After he retired from playing, Nicholl led Walsall to promotion from Division Three in 1995 during a three-year stint as manager.

He spoke to former England striker Alan Shearer as part of a BBC documentary investigating links between dementia and heading footballs.

Nicholl said: "I am brain-damaged from heading footballs.

"My memory is in trouble. Everyone forgets regular things, where your keys are.

"But when you forget where you live, that's different.

"I've had that for the last four or five years, it is definitely getting worse. It bothers me."

Degenerative

Nicholl is among a string of former pros – including Albion legend Jeff Astle – to have been struck down after their playing days have ended.

Astle died in 2002 aged just 59 from chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), a degenerative brain disease caused by heading footballs.

His family have been campaigning for years to get the Football Association and FIFA to conduct research into heading.

Shearer, who made his top-flight debut as a teenager under Nicholl at Southampton, said: "It was tough to see the way Chris is now, because he gave me my debut.

"He had me heading 100 or 150 balls a day to improve, but he did it for the right reasons."

The BBC documentary shows current Aston Villa captain John Terry admitting he encourages his 11-year-old daughter Summer Rose to head the ball, even though experts fear girls are at the greatest risk of concussion.

Shearer, 47, had scans and tests to examine how heading the ball affected him, amid fears he has sustained long-term damage.

The results were revealed on the show, Alan Shearer,



Alan Shearer, who fears he may be susceptible to dementia after heading the ball throughout his footballing career

SPORTING FEATURE

By David Cosgrove

Dementia, Football and Me, which was first shown on BBC1 on Sunday, November 12 at 10.30pm and is available on the BBC iPlayer.

The Match of the Day pundit said: "Nowhere near enough research has been done. The authorities have been very reluctant to find out any answers.

"They have swept it under the carpet, which is not good enough.

"Football must look after old players with dementia and put an end to this sense that, once you are done playing, you can be put on the scrapheap.

"It's a tough game, it's a brilliant game, but we have to make sure it's not a killer game."

Experts suspected heading footballs may cause brain damage and dementia for decades but a firm link was not made until the inquest into Astle's death.

A coroner found he died from a form of dementia called CTE, known as boxer's brain, caused by heading footballs.

In the 15 years since, neither the Football Association nor international body FIFA have funded any meaningful research into the dangers of heading footballs.

FA medical director Charlotte Cowie accepted it had avoided the issue in the past but said: "I feel we like are running towards this problem at the moment."

She said the FA were looking to study former professional footballers to get results as quickly as possible, and it could ban children from heading the ball if early evidence showed it damaged the brain.

Knockout night with boxing champ Fury

BOXING fans can enjoy a knockout night as Tyson Fury makes his debut appearance in Wolverhampton for an audience with fans.

The 'Turkey & Tinsel with Tyson' takes place on December 13 at the Ramada Park Hall Hotel. The former unified heavyweight champion of the world will share his personal story – live and unscripted on stage, interviewed by Gareth A Davis.

He will answer questions from the audience, with the festive evening also featuring a mix of top entertainment, red carpet drinks reception, memorabilia auction and Christmas meal.

Tickets start at £55, rising to £85 for a silver package and £150 for gold, which includes a picture with Fury. For the full VIP experience at £200 guests can also enjoy a VIP meet and greet, a prime table location and a signed glove.

Fundraising will be in aid of Foundation DB set up by Wolves captain Danny Bath. Tickets are being sold at www.tysonfury.eventbrite.co.uk

Pitching in for work on new 3G surface

A NEW 3G pitch is to be launched at Dudley's Dell Stadium. The modern playing surface will replace the existing 18-year-old artificial grass pitch.

The work, part of Dudley council's playing pitch strategy, began on Monday and should take around 12 weeks to complete. The project was developed in partnership with Sport England and the Football Association.

The £660,000 cost will be made up of £550,000 funding through The FA, The Football Foundation and £110,000 from Dudley Council.

Existing users of the facility have been temporarily relocated to other sites in the borough and the Saturday morning ParkRun has been suspended for the duration of the works.

This investment is in addition to the council's commitment to invest £22m in the wider leisure service which includes plans for a new leisure centre in Dudley, as well as refurbishing and modernising the existing leisure centres in Halesowen and Stourbridge. Booking enquiries should be made to Steve Gay, area manager, at steve.gay@dudley.gov.uk

Greats turn out for former team-mate

MIDLAND footballing greats came together to help raise funds for former Albion and Villa goalkeeper Derek Dudley, who is suffering from a terminal illness. The 47-year-old contracted a serious liver condition and it was his final wish to bring former friends from the footballing world together for a final game. It was staged on Sunday at Sutton Coldfield Town FC's home ground where a number of former players were watched by a large crowd.

Dudley, who spent four years at Villa, lives in Rugeley with his wife Helen and children Daniel, 13, and Elizabeth, 11.

His bucket list includes having a nice meal with his children and getting the 'lads' together for one last game.

He was joined by members of Villa's 1982 European Cup winning side including Peter Withe, Tony Morley and Gordon Cowans as well former Baggies team-mates including Daryl Burgess and Darren Bradley.

When his football career ended, Derek became a teacher, including a spell at The Brades Lodge school in Tividale.



Debutant's header earns Yeltz point

Halesowen Town 1 Marine 1
MIDFIELDER Ivor Lawton marked his full Halesowen debut with a late equaliser to earn the Yeltz a vital point against relegation rivals Marine.

And boss John Hill said there will be more to come from the former Coventry City midfielder.

"He is short of match fitness and we've worked him hard in training this week," Hill said. "But the one thing for sure is that Ivor will get fitter and stronger."

"It was probably a fair result overall but the game should have been dead and buried by half-time. We had three or four clear-cut chances and if you don't take them then it comes back to haunt you."

Halesowen were guilty of missing a string of first-half chances. Their best chance came on 38 minutes when on-loan John McAtee's shot was deflected into the path of fellow loanee Dan Udoh and his effort brought a decent save from Martin Fearon in the Marine goal. Meanwhile visiting skipper Dany Mitchley was twice denied by Yeltz keeper Dan Platt.

After an impressive opening 45 minutes, Yeltz struggled after the break and fell behind on 69 minutes when James Murray sent a delightful chip over the head of Platt from the edge of the area.

The goal spurred Hill's side on in search of an equaliser and it came six minutes from the end. Udoh saw his shot deflected past the post and Lawson headed home from the resulting corner.

Superfans Roger and Dave Turner have been presented with a framed shirt for not missing a Yeltz game home and away for 25 years.

The presentation was made at the Shaw Lane game on November 11.

Glassboys fail to make up ground

Shaw Lane 3 Stourbridge 1
STOURBRIDGE had a torrid time at Shaw Lane as their attempts to gain ground on their fellow Evo-Stik Premier promotion chasers came to nothing.

Glassboys were without the suspended Stuart Pierpoint and Aaron Forde and things were always going to be difficult against the managerless South Yorkshire side.

Shaw Lane's Ryan Qualter was only yellow carded for an off-the-ball incident in which he made contact with Kyle Perry's face and 10 minutes later Paul McCone brought down Chib Chilaka for a penalty. Spencer Harris converted.

The Glassboys' defence could do little about Harris's strike for his second goal on 25 minutes, a rasping drive beyond goalkeeper Matt Gould.

On 56 minutes it was three as Byrne was given time and space on the edge of the Stourbridge box to deliver a cross on to the head of unmarked Chilaka who easily scored. Luke Benbow pulled a goal back with an excellent volley.

Spaniard in the works for title bout

RICKY Summers has vowed to take out his frustration on new opponent Romero Gonzalo this weekend.

The Tipton light heavyweight was set to face Coventry's Joe Sherriff for the vacant Midlands Area Light Heavyweight Title on Saturday but illness has forced his opponent out and Summers will now face Spanish opposition at the top of BCB Promotions' show at the Imperial Banqueting Suite, Bilston.

The 30 year-old knows patience is a virtue after waiting for his chance to battle Frank Buglioni

for the British Title last time out. That fight was postponed for a number of months after Buglioni, who went on to claim a points victory, suffered a cut in sparring.

Summers though, frustrated by Sherriff's late pull out, is ready to put in a career-best performance against Gonzalo next weekend.

"The only word to sum it up is frustration," he explained. "I'm ready to take my frustrations out on him and blow him out the water."

Meanwhile Rowley Regis' Jason Welborn lines up for his 28th bout having seen his year stalled

since a one-sided points victory over the unbeaten Marcus Morrison live on Sky in March.

Success at Morrison's expense earned him the WBC International Silver middleweight title and he's also been a Midlands champion at two weights. Two attempts to claim British honours were unsuccessful but Welborn is not giving up on his dream of getting his hands on a Lonsdale belt. Black Country boys James Beech Jr and debutant Antony Woolery also feature. Tickets are £35, or £40 on the night, via the boxers on Facebook or at iboxingtickets.com

Marathon gentleman of Verona

THERE was more cross country action for Dudley Kingswinford Running Club as a small group travelled to Bullwell Hall, Nottingham, for the Midlands 7 for the men and 5 for the ladies.

Away from the league action this was more of a cup game for the blue hoops.

In a competition open to entrants from the Midlands region DK were racing against the likes of Notts AC, Hermitage Harriers, Ilkeston RC and Beeston AC along the usual Black Country heavyweights of Tipton Harriers and Wolverhampton & Bilston.

With six to count as a team for the men and four for the ladies it was a disappointing turnout with both genders failing to field a full team. Those that did run were able to take part as individuals.

The ladies were off first over a five-mile, three-lap course around relatively flat and dry parkland. After chasing the leaders Helen Tromans finished 14th in 35.49 and Hannah McGuire came home in 40.45 in 36th place.

The men raced over a seven-mile course over four laps. Dave Norman was first back for the club in 87th place in 45.36. Graham Wildgoose was 119th in 50.42. Andy Weaver 126th in 51.25 and Richard Jones stopped the clock in 52.39 to take 133rd.

Roger Beddard took part in the Verona Marathon after doubting whether he would make it. Emergency treatment on a hamstring injury and a late fitness test got him to the start line, all he had to do was finish. And he did - in 4.36.15.

Axed Pulis heads the list for Wales role

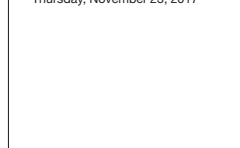
FORMER Baggies boss Tony Pulis is favourite to take over as Wales national manager following his Hawthorns sacking. Albion's 4-0 defeat to Chelsea ended the 59-year-old's near three-year reign at Baggies after a disastrous run of two wins in 21 games.

He is now as short as 4/7 to replace Chris Coleman ahead of second-placed Ryan Giggs at 2/1.

In a statement, Pulis said he had been proud to manage the Baggies. Chairman John Williams said: "These decisions are never taken lightly. We are in a results business and ours have been very disappointing."

★★★

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HALES CLAIM DERBY CLASH

Dudley Kingswinford 24 Old Halesonians 31
OLD Hales claimed the bragging rights in a North Midlands Plate derby clash.

The visitors' quarter-final victory takes them through to a last four clash against Hereford.

Both teams are having contrasting seasons, with DK flying high in their respective league and Old Hales languishing at the foot of theirs.

So the scene was set with DK keen to add to Old Hales' woes by putting one over their local rivals from the league above. Hales were looking for relief from the toils of league fixtures.

An evening match, which is a rarity, added to the atmosphere, with a good crowd in attendance on a cold damp evening.

Both sides worked hard to gain a territorial advantage and there tackles a-plenty.

Hales broke the deadlock with a score from Jamie Keen. DK crossed the ref once too often and a yellow card was awarded. Hales were now in the ascendancy and taking advantage of their numerical advantage.

Challenge

Dan Smith scored and an easy conversion from Keen followed. But DK were keen to show the home support that they were up for the challenge and gave the home fans something to cheer scoring in the corner. The conversion was missed.

Two tries followed for Hales, scored by Andrew Holloway and Kieran Haynes, converted by Keen to give Hales a 26-5 half-time advantage.

Hales began the second half stronger and Haynes scored his second try and the visitors looking comfortable.

DK were not for rolling over, though, and made a fist of it.

Tries kept coming for the home side and the scoreline was getting closer.

The penalty count was increasing against Hales and Matt Williams received a yellow card. DK scored again with the conversion following and were just seven points behind, but Hales managed to cling on to their advantage.



Halesowen try to get in a tackle on DK's Stefan Shillingford

Colts allow hosts to level match late on

Stafford Colts 31 Old Halesonians Colts 31
Old Hales Colts travelled to Stafford with a reduced squad of 17 players due to injuries. The game started well with Old Hales taking charge in the first period. The visitors held a

seven-point lead with just eight minutes to go.

However, poor structure left holes in the Old Halesonians defence due to players playing out of position. This gave Stafford the chance to level 31-31.

It was a great game of rugby

to watch with a great team effort all round.

Old Hales' points came from Jack Eillott, Henry Thomas, Jack Manison, Luke Willetts and Edward Symonds.

Jake Saul kicked three conversions.

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